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THE WOMEN WHO MAKE OUR NOVELS

BOOKS BY GRANT OVERTON

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THE WOMEN WHO MAKE OUR NOVELS
WHY AUTHORS GO WRONG AND OTHER EXPLANATIONS
WHEN WINTER COMES TO MAIN STREET
AMERICAN NIGHTS ENTERTAINMENT
CARGOES FOR CRUSOES
AUTHORS OF THE DAY
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Novels

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THE THOUSAND AND FIRST NIGHT

Editor

MIRRORS OF THE YEAR, 1926-27
CREAM OF THE JUG. Humorous stories.
THE WORLD'S 100 BEST SHORT STORIES

THE WOMEN WHO MAKE OUR NOVELS

by
GRANT OVERTON

New and Completely Revised Edition

Essay Index Reprint Series

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INTRODUCTION

In the summer and early fall of 1918, from hastily gathered material, I wrote a book called "The Women Who Make Our Novels."

This is a different book.

Although it bears the same title, it entirely rewrites the earlier volume and adds a great deal of new material.

The book I wrote nearly ten years ago was pretty bad; first books are likely to be and hurried books are sure to be. As the subjects were living Americans it has become, despite some slight revision, seriously out of date. Several writers have died; many have published their most important work in the period since 1918. New authors have come into prominence.

This would not matter much if my book of 1918 had expired peacefully, or if some similar volume had come along to supplant it. But a continuing sale makes this new book necessary.

Briefly, this book covers the same field. Those authors who have died are generally retained. They are, to an appreciable extent, alive for present-day readers. As to the limitation of the field to Americans, I have stretched a point to include Susan Ertz and E. Barrington. But might not an Englishman in a twin enterprise include Anne Douglas Sedgwick and Mary Borden?

I have dealt with some ladies in a page or less, to others I give extended chapters. This inequality calls for a word of explanation. Many writers are primarily entertainers, or moralists embodying their message in a story. As such they are often widely popular; but be-

yond the essential facts, including the acknowledgment of their popular influence, there is nothing to be said about them. Others, of whom this is not true, are nevertheless in need of no special exposition or comment. In every case length was determined by what there seemed to be to say that was worth saying.

The great convenience of an alphabetical arrangement has led me to present the subjects in that order. A desire to make the book readable in itself prompted me to a different order of the chapters. But I finally reflected that no one, presumably, is going to read straight through. A reader will naturally skip hither and yon, seeking the authors in whom he is particularly interested; in a work of this sort the reader makes the book readable for himself, and the alphabetical arrangement will facilitate his task in doing so.

My best thanks are hereby expressed—to the authors, in many instances; to their publishers, in all—for help given me.

GRANT OVERTON

Santa Fé, New Mexico,
January 1, 1928.

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THE WOMEN WHO MAKE OUR NOVELS

ELEANOR HALLOWELL ABBOTT

It may help to explain Eleanor Hallowell Abbott, a very popular magazine fiction writer, to say that she is a granddaughter of Jacob Abbott, who wrote the Rollo books.

The Abbotts came from Maine. Lyman Abbott, Henry Ward Beecher's successor at Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, New York, was an uncle.

Eleanor Hallowell Abbott was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1872, the daughter of the Rev. Edward Abbott and Clara Davis Abbott. She was for a while a student at Radcliffe College. She was married in 1908 to Fordyce Coburn, M.D., of Lowell, Massachusetts. Her home is now in Wilton, New Hampshire.

Books by Eleanor Hallowell Abbott

1910. Molly Make-Believe. *Century.*
1911. The Sick-a-Bed Lady and Other Stories. *Century.*
1913. The White-Linen Nurse. *Century.*
1914. Little Eve Edgarton. *Century.*
1915. The Indiscreet Letter. *Century.*
1917. The Stingy Receiver. *Century.*
1918. The Ne'er-Do-Much. *Dodd, Mead.*
1919. Old-Dad. *Dutton.*
1920. Peace on Earth.
1921. Rainy Week.
1922. The Fairy Prince and Other Stories.
1923. Silver Moon.

GERTRUDE ATHERTON

An American weekly, the *New Republic,* describes itself as "a journal of opinion." The description might apply to almost every novel Gertrude Atherton has written in her long and lively career as a novelist. Almost without exception her fiction has been made the vehicle for ideas —not single, dominating ideas but casual, highly incisive judgments on everything under the sun. She lards her narrative with opinions, but it is not thereby rendered more tender.

Always aware that she would have made her mark in a dozen other directions—as a historian, journalist, publicist, member of Congress or *dux femina facti* of some sort—she cannot keep the consciousness out of her stories, and doesn't try to. Aristocratic in all her attitudes, she prefers frankness and is not afraid of coarseness. When her material has been of the best, she has wrought superb effects, as in "The Conqueror"; with more ordinary stuff she has succeeded so poorly that the serviceable substance appears to be the merest shoddy—example, "Mrs. Balfame."

Her temperament explains this. She once warred with William Dean Howells over the matter of American literary tendency. Mr. Howells was all for the realistic novel, which had not then developed such profound divergences as Willa Cather's "My Antonia" and Sinclair Lewis's "Main Street." The realistic novel at that time, especially as illustrated by Mr. Howells's own performance, seemed to Mrs. Atherton the very apotheosis of the unimportant and the humdrum; and she said so. She said so in such unmistakable language, with such a wealth

of personal allusion, that Mr. Howells was heard no more for a while.

She rather likes to shock the multitude, as when she described her marriage as "one of the most important incidents of my school life." She should, perhaps, have taken a man's name for a pen name; but had she done so we would find ourselves mentioning her in the same breath with George Sand, rather than George Eliot. It is easy to think of her as Madame Atherton, and her range of brilliant acquaintance is like that of the great Frenchwomen of the salon.

A restless vitality has led her more than once into literary dissipations. But it enabled her, at 65, to turn out a capitally-done novel of the hour, "Black Oxen," and then to plunge deeply into the historical research necessary to understand and recreate the life of ancient Athens. It is possible that no other woman of our time could have produced, at the age of 69, such a novel as "The Immortal Marriage," the story of Pericles and Aspasia. What man? Well, Bernard Shaw. But Shaw gave up being a novelist.

II

Gertrude (Franklin) Atherton, a great grandniece of Benjamin Franklin, was born in 1857 in San Francisco, the daughter of Thomas L. Horn and Gertrude Franklin Horn. She was educated at St. Mary's Hall, Benicia, California, and at Sayre Institute, Lexington, Kentucky. At an early age she was married to George H. Bowen Atherton, of Menlo Park, California. Mr. Atherton was averse to travel and when, finally, he was conveyed to Chile as a guest on a warship, took mortally ill, dying when Mrs. Atherton was 30.

Mrs. Atherton's first novel appeared five years later, "The Doomswoman," a tale of California in 1840, the

first of a series of novels picturing life in that State between 1800 and 1906.

Much travel, life abroad, life in New York and a settled residence in San Francisco have marked the thirty-five years since.

III

The California novels, except for Californians, seem to have lost interest. The background remains—background. Often, as in "The Californians," it is no better than a painted canvas backdrop. Re-reading the story is difficult until the return of Helena Belmont makes such dreadful havoc in the engagement of Magdalena and Trennahan. Then for some pages Mrs. Atherton becomes the genuine novelist. To the picture of Trennahan, clear-headed but helpless in the clutch of passion, she is quite adequate.

"Senator North" (1900) showed Mrs. Atherton's instinct for the novel of the hour. Its element of sensation is the problem of negro blood and miscegenation; it anticipated Thomas Dixon's "The Clansman" by five years. Two years later, after investigations that took her to the island of Nevis in the British West Indies, she produced "The Conqueror."

A quarter of a century has passed but the sales of "The Conqueror" are not much affected by time. Mrs. Atherton had first intended to write a biography of Alexander Hamilton. "The Conqueror," in fact, reads less like a novel than the "dramatized biography" which it really is. The invention is pretty well confined to conversations and unimportant detail.

"There were, we know, a few persons who resisted Hamilton," says Henry James Forman. "But important though they were, they are as dust under Mrs. Atherton's feet. Hamilton led a charmed life. Hurricanes had spared him and the storms of war, of party, of faction

left him safe. He was a genius, and cosmic forces enfolded him as in a protective shell. Surely no character was ever more certainly created to the hand of a novelist than was Hamilton for Mrs. Atherton. Not a merit or fault of his, but Mrs. Atherton could caress it with a mother's hand. How she hates Clinton because he fought her idol, and how much she despises Jefferson! But Washington—even the most austere of the virtues of Washington pass with Mrs. Atherton, because he loved Hamilton as a father loves a son."

California in 1904-6 is the setting of "Ancestors" (1907). The novel culminates with the San Francisco earthquake and fire. "Tower of Ivory" (1910), "Perch of the Devil" (1914), "Black Oxen" (1923) and "The Immortal Marriage" (1927) are her best novels of the years since. The first, laid in Munich, is a study in genius. "Perch of the Devil" is the story of Ida Compton, of Butte, Montana, and her social evolution. An interesting comparison is with Edith Wharton's "The Custom of the Country." The possibilities of physical rejuvenation suggested by the work of Steinach and others inspired "Black Oxen." The genius of Aspasia, rather than that of Pericles, is celebrated in "The Immortal Marriage."

Books by Gertrude Atherton

*** Of first importance
** Of next importance
* Third in importance

1892. The Doomswoman. California, 1840.
1895. A Whirl Asunder. California, 1890s. *Stokes.*
1897. Patience Sparhawk and Her Times. Monterey, California, and New York. *Stokes.*
1897. His Fortunate Grace. *Lane.*
1898. American Wives and English Husbands. California, 1880s. *Dodd, Mead.*

1898. THE CALIFORNIANS. California, 1880s. *Stokes.*
1899. A DAUGHTER OF THE VINE. California, 1860s. *Lane.*
1899. THE VALIANT RUNAWAYS. California, 1840. A book for boys. *Dodd, Mead.* Republished in 1918.
1900. SENATOR NORTH. Washington. *Lane.*
1901. THE ARISTOCRATS. Adirondacks. *Lane.*
1902. *** THE CONQUEROR. Novelized biography of Alexander Hamilton. *Macmillan.*
1902. THE SPLENDID IDLE FORTIES. California, 1800-46. *Stokes.*
1903. A FEW OF HAMILTON'S LETTERS. *Stokes.*
1904. RULERS OF KINGS. Austria, Hungary, the Adirondacks. *Harper.*
1905. THE BELL IN THE FOG. Short stories. *Harper.*
1905. THE TRAVELLING THIRDS. Spain. *Harper.*
1906. ** REZANOV. California, 1806. See below: BEFORE THE GRINGO CAME.
1907. * ANCESTORS. California, 1904-6. *Harper.*
1908. THE GORGEOUS ISLE. Nevis, British West Indies. *Doubleday.*
1910. ** TOWER OF IVORY. Munich. *Stokes.*
1912. JULIA FRANCE AND HER TIMES. British West Indies and England. *Stokes.*
1914. ** PERCH OF THE DEVIL. Montana. *Stokes.*
1914. *** CALIFORNIA: AN INTIMATE HISTORY. *Harper.*
1915. BEFORE THE GRINGO CAME (combining THE DOOMSWOMAN and REZANOV). *Stokes.*
1916. MRS. BALFAME. Murder mystery. *Stokes.*
1917. THE LIVING PRESENT. War observations and studies of a few contemporary feminists. *Stokes.*
1918. THE WHITE MORNING. Romantic novel of a wartime revolution in Germany with a woman as leader. *Stokes.*
1919. THE AVALANCHE.. Light mystery. *Stokes.*
1921. THE SISTERS-IN-LAW. *Stokes.*
1922. SLEEPING FIRES. *Stokes.*
1923. ** BLACK OXEN. *Liveright.*
1925. THE CRYSTAL CUP. *Liveright.*
1927. *** THE IMMORTAL MARRIAGE. Ancient Athens. *Liveright.*

Sources on Gertrude Atherton

An article on her, probably by way of review of "The White Morning," by Henry James Forman and appearing in the literary pages of the New York *Evening Post* of June 15, 1918, constitutes the sole criticism with insight into her work.

MARY AUSTIN

A GREAT deal of success in art consists in doing one thing. We have now to deal with a writer who is several things besides; and who is of more moment as a woman and person than, even, as a writer.

"Criticism," observes Carl Van Doren, "perceives in Mary Austin the certain signs of a power which, for reasons not entirely clear, has as yet failed to express itself completely in forms of art." To this one must take decided exception. The power has certainly expressed itself completely in several books. And the reasons why it has frequently failed of complete expression are pretty obvious.

To put it summarily, Mrs. Austin has preferred the fullness of life to the unbrokenness of a single achievement. She is, as well as an author, a scholar, publicist and citizen. She likes to contribute to all of the things that interest her and that seem to her of some cultural importance, from ethnology to the question of dividing the waters of the Colorado River. She is concerned only that her contribution shall be a sound one. It may be of minor importance, it may have to be made anonymously; she doesn't care. She who can assert herself most powerfully can efface herself just as thoroughly. On the whole, her self-effacement has had most calls for exercise, and the calls have been met. If she writes her autobiography without undue modesty, her own generation may recognize how much it owes her. The next will, anyway.

Her very knowledge of her subject has frequently handicapped her. She is, for best example, a very great

authority on the American Indian; but she knows far too much about him to do the most popular book on the subject. For that some restless, sponge-like and more superficial mind is needed. Give H. G. Wells a year of books on the Amerind, conversations with Mrs. Austin, and perhaps the three days of Fred Harvey's Indian Detour, and he would produce an "Outline of the Amerind" as brilliant as the "Outline of History." And we would all read it, rejoicing, convinced that we had the last word. . . .

But if a matchless book is sought, something on the order of "The Land of Little Rain" or "The Flock," no living American writer and perhaps no living writer can distill it for us with the perfection of Mrs. Austin.

For she can do, has done, what no other American writer could accomplish. Whenever she tries to do the regulation thing, in a conventional form, she does it rather badly; at best, indifferently. The trouble is, she has genius of much too large a denomination to be available for current use; she has to convert it, at a constant loss, into the talents of ordinary circulation. We insist that she trade her $10,000 bill for our hundred-dollar ones, and we give her ninety of them, and some we give her are not good.

II

Her personal history explains a good deal. She was born in Carlinville, Illinois, in 1868, the daughter of George Hunter and Savilla Graham Hunter. There were four generations of pioneers behind her, each generation in a different State. At twenty she was graduated from Blackburn University and at that time serious ill-health drove her to California. A "friendly destiny" provided that she should settle on the eastern slope of the Sierras and the edge of the Mojave Desert. She was for a while in Lone Pine, where the population was two-thirds

Mexican; she taught a spell in the normal school at Los Angeles, but was glad to return to the desert. After her marriage in 1891 to Stafford W. Austin, of Bakersfield, California, she lived in Independence, in Owens Valley, on the edge of Death Valley, Mr. Austin being registrar of the United States Land Office.

Ute, Paiute, Mojave and Shoshone Indians were close by. All the types of that frontier came under her observation, from the English remittance man to the gold-crazed prospector. A birth or death enlisted the personal activity of every woman in the neighborhood. But the desert dominated everything else. At this time she wrote: "All of Mary Austin's work is like her life, out of doors, nights under the pines, long days' watchings by water holes to see the wild things drink, breaking trail up new slopes, heat, cloudburst, snow, wild beast and mountain bloom, all equally delightful because understood. I have just *looked,* nothing more; and when I was too sick to do anything else I could lie out under the sagebrush. I was only two months writing 'The Land of Little Rain' but I spent twelve years peeking and prying before I began it."

A visitor to Independence described her. "Mrs. Austin has an Indian-like solemnity, a pervading shyness. All that she says has a certain value. She speaks seldom. Her utterance is rather slow and her remarks are usually grave. The desert has cloistered her." But in striking contrast with this usual demeanor and habit of abstraction, Mrs. Austin would occasionally exhibit another self. Once the driver of the stage which traversed the desert for 130 miles complained that the water of Mojave made him sick. "I put him inside and took the stage in from Red Rock to Coyote Holes. The other passengers, a barber with a wooden leg and a Londoner, head of a mining syndicate, took care of my baby." Frequently on

Sunday, no minister of any sort being on hand, Mrs. Austin would go and ring the church bell. "The villagers have accepted me on the same basis as the weather. They will come in to hear me in the most natural manner."

Along with such resourcefulness, her instinct for mysticism has occasionally involved her in episodes that have seemed to more self-conscious folk theatrical. There are legends about Mary Austin in every place where she has lived. Most of them are without foundation in fact; some are the product of the superb imaginations once centered in Carmel, California. There, after her escape from the desert, she was for a while the center of a group such as scarcely exists anywhere at this hour. She, Jack London, the poet George Sterling and James Hopper formed a quartet of some importance in the literary history of our time. But as illustrating her myth-making faculty, the following incident, which is true enough, may be re-told:

She was at one time given a pass permitting her to enter the Museum of Natural History in New York at any hour of the day or night and she used to go there at midnight and, standing among the Indian relics, fall into a trance that placed her in a mystic communion with the Great Spirit and the souls of the dead. And once, by daylight, to the alarm of a guard who supposed for a moment that she had designs on the collection, she took several relics from a case that had been opened for her and placing them in her bosom fell into a state of silent ecstasy. Great was the guard's relief when, after a few minutes, she returned the relics to the case and explained that she had been in communication with the gods of the red men.

Van Wyck Brooks, who recalls this tale, does so to give an explanation. "Mrs. Austin's novel, 'A Woman of Genius,' is the story of a great actress. Those who

have read or seen her play, 'The Arrow Maker,' will remember the character of Chisera, the Medicine Woman, who acts as an advocate with the gods for the tribe. That, in Mary Austin's view, is what the artist really is or ought to be: that, the rôle of a priestess, an inspired leader, is the rôle which she has always thought of herself as filling. To her society is always the tribe, the artist always the Chisera."

III

In affairs of this sort she behaved always with a transparent sincerity. Except in second-hand hearsay, she has been ridiculous only to people of less sincerity, excessive self-consciousness and limited humor. For she herself does not lack humor. She could see and indicate the humorousness of the villagers, cheerfully resigned to her deeds and sermons. In 1917, discussing the heroines of current fiction, she wrote: "See if you can discover a leading lady who has any other point of attachment to the story than her sex relations. Mr. Wells leads the way with a procession of the sort of ladies an Englishman runs away with and the sort he runs away from. Mr. Galsworthy's women . . . do not seem to have any power to affect the course of the story except through the personal interest of some man. Even Miss Sinclair, though she is always on the side of her women, never describes them in any other relations than such as are expressly allowed—or forbidden—by the marriage service." It is not only keen criticism, it is the best humor in the world, the sort that is without the slightest malice. If Mrs. Austin's attitude were more general, the quality of the world's humor would be vastly improved.

Besides, her favorite relaxation from study and writing has always been cooking, and she is a masterly cook. One cannot cook, and cook well, and remain humorless.

IV

About the time of finishing "The Land of Little Rain," she said:

"I think the best and worst of it is that I am a little too near to my material. Where I seem to skimp, I can understand now that the book is cold. It was only that I presupposed a greater knowledge in the reader. During the last six months I have discovered that the same thing is happening to me that I complained of in 'Jimville'—the desert has 'struck in.'" [1] But she was soon to get away from the Mojave and take refuge—a doubtful refuge—in the Eastern pueblos. The fiestas of the arty and the intellectual were to know her; she was to descend into the kivas of Gramercy Park and Wellington Crescent.[2] The danger in these somewhat inevitable proceedings was not that Mary Austin would become futuristic or foolish. As she once remarked, she had seen the Grand Canyon, and could afford to visit the Liberal Club. But a certain amount of diffusion was sure to take place. She would do too many things too well.

She did. Her self-set tasks have been thankless and often, no doubt, she preferred them to be so. Something in her—the serious passion of the scholar, the penetration of the mystic—walked warily when it came to public recognition and reward. She was the first to promote community theaters. She spent years of her life and tons of energy in behalf of the enfranchisement of women, but except for an occasional polite official recognition her sex ignored this activity. She is much too abstract, too tolerant, too impersonal in her attitudes for

[1] "Jimville: A Bret Harte Town," in "The Land of Little Rain."

[2] Pueblos: Indian communities of walled houses. Fiestas: festivals. Kivas: ceremonial chambers of pueblos. Wellington Crescent: a harmless street here drafted, most improperly, to represent an aspect of London similar to the aspect of New York offered by the phrase, "Gramercy Park."

popularity with her sisters; she makes emotional responses from which they hang back doubtfully and remains aloof from their more mysterious preoccupations which, in her view, are probably trivial. She fares infinitely better with the men. It is hardly exaggerating to say that she is the only woman in America who is *persona grata* to the members of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. An example of her genius and her willing anonymity—her disinterested, scientist's attitude—is her invention of the phrase, "the humanization of knowledge," gladly handed over to James Harvey Robinson for unacknowledged use in the great cause it expresses.

She has been called a great woman; but the fact is, she is a great person who happens to be a woman. In considering her work we have to remember that it is the production of a student of human life and society who has occasionally used the novel as a medium of expression, just as she has used the drama, poetry, the essay and the scientific article.

V

"The Land of Little Rain" (1903), "The Flock" (1906), "Lost Borders" (1909), "A Woman of Genius" (1912), "The Man Jesus" (1915), "The American Rhythm" (1923) and "The Land of Journeys' Ending" (1924) are the books in which, so far, she completely expresses herself, or the genius that is in her. Not one of them fits a standard mold. The first two are the most beautiful and most perfect; "The Man Jesus" is largest of stature, and "The American Rhythm" is the most original.

"The Land of Little Rain" consists of fourteen sketches. There are in the world a number of deserts, with markedly different characteristics. Most of them

have been pictured in words. Some of these transcriptions are very wonderful. None surpasses Mrs. Austin's painting of the Mojave, wholly individualized, done in an English prose that will sustain comparison with the style of any writer in our literature.

East away from the Sierras, south from Panamint and Amargosa, east and south many an uncounted mile, is the Country of Lost Borders.

Ute, Paiute, Mojave and Shoshone inhabit its frontiers, and as far into the heart of it as a man dare go. Not the law, but the land sets the limit. Desert is the name it wears upon the maps, but the Indian's is the better word.

Or this, from the opening of "Lost Borders," a continuation of the records in "The Land of Little Rain":

Out there, where the law and the landscape fail together, the souls of little men fade out at the edges, leak from them as water from wooden pails warped asunder. . . . Out there I have seen things happen that I do not believe myself.

That this power to distill beauty was no mere accident of those desert years is shown by the following passage, extracted from a magazine article written twenty years later:

The Mission San Carlos Borromeo looks inshore up the valley of Carmel to the lilac-colored crests of Santa Lucia; off shore, the view just clears the jaws of Lobos along the sunpath between it and Cypress Point. Full in the crescent bay the sea lifts in a hollow curve of chrysoprase, whose edge goes up in smoking foam along the hard-packed beaches—ever and ever, disregardful of the nondescript shacks, the redwood bungalows and pseudo-Spanish haciendas crowding one another between the beach and the high road. But when I first came to

this land, a virgin thicket of buckthorn sage and sea-blue lilac spread between well-spaced, long-leaved pines. The dunes glistened white, with violet shadows, and in warm hollows, between live oaks, the wine of light had mellowed undisturbed a thousand years.[3]

And "The Flock"! Mrs. Austin begins with the early Spaniards who drove their flocks up from Velicata, in the year when Daniel Boone moved into the then unknown West, the year also of the Boston Massacre. She carries her description through every phase of sheep-herding, in the valleys, on the mountains, in rain and in drought. She tells of the herders and of the shearers, the Frenchman, the Spaniard, the Basque, and the American, their ways and their rivalries; the shearing baile[4] and the parting of the flocks; the long trail, and how the day's work is accomplished; the open range; the country where there is no weather; and the Sierra meadows. There are some fine passages about the dogs, and a chapter on the strife of the herdsman for control of the free pastures; the beasts of prey and their methods of attacking the flock, and the shepherds' defenses. The book closes with a chapter on "The Sheep and the Forest Reserves," with an account of an old California sheep range, and the story of Don Jose Jesus.

"Lost Borders" deals more with men and women, less with landscape, than "The Land of Little Rain." Mrs. Austin's interest is the effect of the desert upon these people but it is certain that, through her own personal familiarity, she gives us too little of them as they were before. In reading they often remain somewhat mirage-like. It is, however, this book of which H. G. Wells was

[3] From "George Sterling at Carmel," by Mary Austin, in the *American Mercury* for May, 1927. It is to be hoped that this will form a chapter in Mrs. Austin's autobiography.

[4] A dance, usually lasting all night.

particularly thinking when, some years ago, he upbraided America for "letting Mary Austin die of neglect, while she worships the 'art' of Mary Ward." [5] Mary Austin—"what other woman can touch her?" asked Wells.

In "A Woman of Genius" we follow Olivia Lattimore through marriage, the birth of a son and his death in infancy, the almost accidental disclosure of her gift for the stage, her struggle with her husband, the gradual breach between them and his defection involving the village dressmaker, the long and harrowing period in Chicago after his death when Olivia was without work or money, and often without hope. After success has been conquered comes the final struggle between Olivia and Helmeth Garrett in which the woman's gift or possession bests even love.

Olivia tells her own story—a device not impossible in an actress superb in tragic rôles. It is an austere, serious narrative; it wears its self-consciousness like an ecclesiastical vestment; and in the attitude of Olivia, cherishing her divine fire, and the attitude of Mrs. Austin, cherishing hers, there is a parallel which doesn't have to be infinitely prolonged to meet and form a single line.

"The Man Jesus" must be put on the shelf with Renan and Papini. "She brings to Jesus what the desert had given her. She achieves a very perfection of courageous understanding whenever Jesus speaks. . . . Her Holy Land is none the less holy for being, in her re-creation of its atmosphere, mostly western and American. She knows the man and his disciples and the countryside through which they wandered because they were desert folk who had, in their time, looked upon her salty desolations and her verdant settlements and condoned the same small lives and great." Thus Carl Van Doren. "The Man Jesus" excludes theology, of course; never-

[5] Mrs. Humphry Ward.

theless—or perhaps because of this—it is a very religious work.

VI

The diversity of her other books must here be sorted out after some fashion. "The Basket Woman" collects Indian legends and Mrs. Austin would rank it with her most important books. "Isidro" is a romantic novel of the California of the padres—and she has no regard for it whatever. "Love and the Soul-Maker" "anatomizes love as a primal force struggling with and through civilization"; very good minds have found it no more than "vague, restless speculations" and first-rate minds have also found it "deeper and broader than all our modern thought." "The Ford" is one of those unfortunate novels sired by a question of public policy in a particular instance. "The book records incidents in my own life in the struggle for the waters of Owens River which the city of Los Angeles stole from us." But Anne Brent in "The Ford" is intensely human compared with Rose Matlock in "No. 26 Jayne Street." Hearken:

"When Mrs. Austin wrote the book Rose was simply a prophetic type which she felt developing out of women's interests . . . put together out of the environment which was bound to create just that type. She was to come from the West, from a small city, of genuinely American stock. She was to have an intellectual basis, which Mrs. Austin symbolized by making her a teacher in a mid-Western university. From that she would go to New York, drawn by an interest in social work. She was to have the highest possible standards of personal behavior and she was to be so uninstructed in personal life that she would have to suffer in order to learn. And what she learned was to be applied with a stern hand to all the relations of life. This was exactly the type which Mrs. Austin, who has had forty years of American femi-

nism to draw upon, felt was rapidly developing out of American life. She had, however, never seen any individual who answered exactly to the type."

Afterward Mrs. Austin met a woman who appeared to be Rose Matlock in the flesh, but as no convention of the readers of "No. 26 Jayne Street" seemed practicable this reassurance avails little.

"The Trail Book" is for children. "The American Rhythm" is for poets—in the widest sense of the word. This is the book of which Amy Lowell thought supremely well, telling Mrs. Austin that she believed Mrs. Austin had anticipated her own special studies in rhythm. "Everyman's Genius" is, most unfortunately, for everybody. It argues that we all have genius, or can acquire its technique, and it offers forms of prayer and deep breathing exercises. In justice it should be stated that the book presents nothing that Mrs. Austin has not herself practiced with authentic results. Long before writing it she said: "People ought to learn how to wish creatively. We don't teach that in schools, but we ought to." Perhaps, if all were Mary Austins. But in the next breath, with her power of keen common sense, she added: "We stuff our minds and get just about as much good for ourselves as a stuffed animal in a museum." Truth, with a capital T.

These are not all, and one more must be singled out for mention. "The Land of Journeys' Ending" deals with Arizona and New Mexico as no other living writer could present them. One has to have been in one or both States to savor the richness of the book. In fact, except one go there, or patiently study Mrs. Austin's text as one might spell out Chaucer, the book is nearly unintelligible, despite the glossary in the back. She knows too much; it seems to her that she has left out the half of her knowledge. But if you stumble through "The

Land of Journeys' Ending" as well as you can, and then visit the Southwest, a re-reading yields the full, and nearly boundless, treasure.

VII

When Mr. Wells spoke of Mrs. Austin's probable death from neglect he showed his profound misunderstanding of the nature of desert growth. Mrs. Austin has been endangered only by well-meant attentions. Having built herself a ten-room adobe house in Santa Fe, there seems some chance that she may escape enough distractions to enable her to do more work equal to her best. Her autobiography, when it comes, will be of high interest and importance. For one thing she played a valuable rôle in assisting Joseph Conrad at a difficult time in his later career. But she embraces too many activities because they seem to her to be forms of service and to make for a full and competent personal life. The Governor of New Mexico summons her to Denver, where seven States are trying to divide the waters of the Colorado River, and she goes, because she knows the matter and fears injustice to Arizona.

"What woman can touch her?" Still, there is none. But there is still time for us to cease demanding from her the literary stereotypes which she cannot give. She, who can make such strange and lovely patterns, has a claim upon our conscience, not merely to be allowed to make them, but to be prized for having made them; to be constrained, so far as we exercise our passive constraint, toward making only more of them—and nothing else.

Books by Mary Austin

*** Of first importance
** Of next importance
* Third in importance

1903. *** The Land of Little Rain. *Houghton Mifflin.* (This novel was reissued in 1927 by Houghton Mifflin.)
1904. *** The Basket Woman. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1905. Isidro. Novel. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1906. *** The Flock. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1908. Santa Lucia. *Harper.*
1909. *** Lost Borders. *Harper.*
1911. ** The Arrow Maker. Play produced at the New Theatre, New York. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1911. Christ in Italy. *Harper.*
1912. **A Woman of Genius. Novel. *Doubleday. Houghton Mifflin.*
1913. The Lovely Lady. *Doubleday.*
1914. Fire. Play produced at Carmel, California.
1914. ** Love and the Soul-Maker. *Harper.*
1915. *** The Man Jesus. Harper.
1916. The Man Who Didn't Believe in Christmas. Play produced in New York.
1917. * The Ford. Novel. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1918. The Young Woman Citizen. *Womans Press.*
1918. The Trail Book. For children. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1919. Outland. Fantastic novel. *Liveright.*
1919. ** Aboriginal Literature. Chapter in the Cambridge History of American Literature.
1920. * No. 26 Jayne Steet. Novel. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1923. ** The American Rhythm.
1924. *** The Land of Journeys' Ending. *Century.*
1925. A Small Town Man (revision of The Man Jesus).
1925. Everyman's Genius. *Bobbs-Merrill.*
1927. ** The Lands of the Sun. Not to be confused with a book of pictures, The Land of the Sun (American edition, California), published in England in 1903, with a text supplied by Mrs. Austin.

Sources on Mary Austin

"George Sterling at Carmel," by Mary Austin, in the *American Mercury* for May, 1927, is interestingly autobiographical.

"Contemporary American Novelists," by Carl Van Doren. Pages 140-143. Macmillan: 1922. A hurried summary.

"The Literary Spotlight," edited by John Farrar. Chapter XVI, Mary Austin, written by Carl Van Doren. Doran: 1924.

"A Reviewer's Note-Book" in the *Freeman* (weekly; no longer published), New York, for June 9, 1920. The Carmel anecdote is, however, utterly without foundation. The writer is Van Wyck Brooks.

"An Interview with Mary Austin," in the *New Success* for August, 1920. Page 44.

"Some Remarks on the Business Woman in Fiction." Article in *The Sun,* New York, for October 20, 1917. Book review pages.

"Many Minds," by Carl Van Doren. Macmillan.

TEMPLE BAILEY

"Nothing," once remarked an able American woman writer, "so appeals to women readers as a good love story. They are, perhaps, a little jaded, much-married, caught up with workaday cares. And it rests and refreshes them to read the story of those not-impossible young lovers. They had almost forgotten that this deliciousness is in the world; they are pleasantly reminded that they, too, once upon a time . . ."

She was not defending the sentimental love story—which no more needs defense and no more merits scorn than a box of confectionery. But what she said explained rather well the popularity of such a writer as Temple Bailey and said what there is to say in justification of it.

(Irene) Temple Bailey was born in Petersburg, Virginia, the daughter of Milo Varnum Bailey and Emma Sprague Bailey. Despite her Virginia birth, her ancestry is of Massachusetts. Her childhood was spent in Washington, D. C., and she was educated in a girls' school at Richmond, Virginia. In recent years Miss Bailey has made her home in St. Louis.

Success with magazine stories led her to try her hand at novels. Two or three of these served to draw her full audience and for the last ten years her new book has regularly been reported among the best-sellers.

Books by Temple Bailey

1907. Judy. For children.
1913. The Glory of Youth.
1915. Contrary Mary.
1917. Mistress Anne.

1917. Adventures in Girlhood.
1919. The Tin Soldier. *Penn.*
1920. The Trumpeter Swan. *Penn.*
1921. The Gay Cockade. *Penn.*
1923. The Dim Lantern. *Penn.*
1924. Peacock Feathers. *Penn.*
1925. The Holly Hedge. *Penn.*
1926. The Blue Window. *Penn.*
1927. Wallflowers. *Penn.*
1928. Silver Slippers.

Sources on Temple Bailey

"Temple Bailey (An Autobiography)" in the *Saturday Evening Post* for November 15, 1919. A short sketch.

FAITH BALDWIN

DISTINCT evidence of the popular writer marks the work of Faith Baldwin, whose half-dozen novels have gradually lifted her into a rôle as a favorite writer with a large and increasing audience.

She was born in 1893 at New Rochelle, New York, a daughter of Stephen C. Baldwin, New York lawyer, granddaughter of Stephen L. Baldwin, missionary bishop of China, and descendant of Robert Treat, a colonial Governor of Connecticut better known as the founder of Newark, New Jersey.

Faith Baldwin was educated in various schools—on Brooklyn Heights, in Westchester County, New York, and Europe. At nine, she had written verse; and after a hymn to Death appeared in a religious journal her parents forbade her to publish until she should be eighteen. She was in Germany from the spring of 1914 to the spring of 1916 but did not write a book about her experiences. After two years of war work in America she became the wife of an ex-aviator who is now an engineer. She has two children and lives in Brooklyn, New York.

Her latest novel, "Garden Oats" (1928), deals with Dolores Brewster, great-granddaughter of a Spanish girl who married a Yankee sea captain and who has inherited the Spanish strain—who is, at seventeen, when the book opens, "a flame in a cool garden, and a gypsy song in a cloister."

BOOKS BY FAITH BALDWIN

THOSE DIFFICULT YEARS.
SIGN POSTS. Poems.
LAUREL OF STONY STREAM.

THRESHOLDS.
MAVIS OF GREEN HILL.
MAGIC AND MARY ROSE. *Dodd, Mead.*
1926. THREE WOMEN. *Dodd, Mead.*
1927. DEPARTING WINGS. *Dodd, Mead.*
1928. GARDEN OATS. *Dodd, Mead.*

MARGARET CULKIN BANNING

MUCH in the novels of Margaret Culkin Banning is so good that the attentive and thoughtful reader of her books is likely to feel that the novels as wholes should be much better. In this he is undoubtedly right. And perhaps, presently, they will.

A fairly prolific and markedly successful short story writer, she has always attacked long fiction with a more serious attitude. Yet even where there has been evidence of deep emotion in her book, as in "Handmaid of the Lord" (1924), she has not always given the reader the clews to that emotion. She is a little like the painters who paint with the light behind them, picking out every detail so clearly as to make a satisfactory picture almost impossible. Some day she will face the sun hung behind a mountainside; in the reduced light of that shaded cliff every tree will be clear but not every leaf; a velvety tone will rub out unimportances in a simplified scene, intensely paintable, entirely within capture, and more mysterious and moving than the brightness of noon.

Too intelligent, too educated, too sincere, too poised, too sane; this is the uneasy verdict on her books so far. But they climb. "The Women of the Family" (1926) and "Pressure" (1927) have more solidity than the five earlier novels.

Margaret Culkin Banning was born in Buffalo, Minnesota, in 1891, the daughter of William Edgar Culkin and Hannah Alice Young Culkin. She was graduated from Vassar in 1912 and spent an extra year studying civics, social work and philanthropy. In 1914 she was married to Archibald Tanner Banning, of Duluth, Minnesota, and

in recent years this city has been her home. She has had much practical experience in politics and the material for some of her best short stories has come from the adventures of herself and other women in political work. Mr. and Mrs. Banning have two children.

"Handmaid of the Lord," her first important novel, has been described as the contrasted study of two sisters, the Martha and Mary types. It would be more accurate to call it the spiritual biography of one, a woman whose marriage rode high for a time on the crest of a wave of material prosperity. When the wave broke the wife was faced for the first time with the problem of what this marriage could be made to mean. Mrs. Banning is not a facile optimist and the wife's solution depends on determination, hope, and perhaps to some extent on religious faith.

A study of several generations is woven into "The Women of the Family." Suzanne, born a Romer, knows the legend of the fate, melancholia and madness, that seems to overtake the Romers of her sex. She marries, bears children, and in time goes the same way. But she has as a friend and neighbor a more resolute and inquiring spirit than her own. Minna digs up the family history of the Romers and goes to Suzanne with the truth of that history. It is not, in itself, a truth that will set her free; but an aroused will-power can make it conquer. The fact is that all these Romer women have married men whose fervor of love has gradually died down and whose constancy has become a little uncertain. When, having measured their husbands and borne their children, life has seemed to offer them only a succession of empty days, they have succumbed to melancholia and become increasingly "queer." It is Minna's point, and Mrs. Banning's, that the day for this fate is past; that if a woman lets herself go spiritually she is as culpable as

when she lets herself go in the matter of clothes and physical appearance.

With the education of women in their new life Mrs. Banning is more concerned, and to more practical purpose, than almost any one now writing fiction. Born in a later generation and in a different section of the country, she is able to start from assumptions that Ellen Glasgow has had laboriously to establish. Repeatedly Mrs. Banning shows the married woman seeking for some adequate interests and some assurance of growth. She refuses to say that the average husband and children will suffice for every woman's lifetime. It is not a question of flagrant unfaithfulness by the husband, but of pettier things; it is not a question of divorce, or lovers. Her women are not the kind who could sate themselves by emotionalism toward their offspring; they are women in whom emotion is strongly controlled by the rational power, and this, it may be, is their great trouble—for no mere rationalizations suffice to make life worth living. Always the change of material fortunes makes a difference to her women out of proportion to the alteration that it makes in many women's lives. At the opening of "Pressure," Catherine Harlow is a young wife with a baby and a devoted husband. They are poor, with their way to make, and a beginning toward making it. Kathleen Norris has shown many a girl like that, ecstatic over her baby and her own little home, thrilled by the struggle to live and excited by the struggle to get ahead. But Catherine Harlow feels nothing of this. On the other hand she is clear-sighted beyond many women and beyond her husband. Keith is taken under the wing of a very rich man, whose echo and genteel slave he becomes. Catherine, despite the bribe of a splendid house, sees the fate that is falling upon her husband and warns him. If she acquiesces in that fate without too much protest it

is because she quickly perceives that Keith is only big enough for a success of that sort.

A more competent novel about the interrelations of political, business and social life in an average American city, than "Pressure," would be very hard to find. Contrasted with the rise of the Harlows is the gradual sinking of Annette Pindar from a conspicuous and lonely fashionable eminence to the anonymity of a waitress's apron in an obscure tea-room. The men, with their discreet mixture of business and politics, are well done. Yet some element of exaggeration or distortion, some surcharge of passion, would have made a better novel. One has only to recall Frank Norris's "The Pit" and remember how one finished it feeling one's chest crushed in, breathing difficult; there was "pressure" for you. Mrs. Banning's people seldom suffer enough.

More color, more intensity, more emotion. She cannot do less well, one feels, and is likely to do extraordinarily better.

Books by Margaret Culkin Banning

1920. This Marrying. *Doran.*
1921. Half Loaves. *Doran.*
1922. Spellbinders. *Doran.*
1923. Country Club People. *Doran.*
1924. Handmaid of the Lord. *Doran.*
1926. The Women of the Family. *Harper.*
1927. Pressure. *Harper.*

E. BARRINGTON (L. ADAMS BECK)

THE Englishwoman who writes certain books as E. Barrington, certain others as L. Adams Beck—and who has even produced two of a third series "by Louis Moresby" —has now for some years been domiciled in Canada and seems likely to make that her permanent home. Her precise eligibility to inclusion in this volume may be waived for that reason and because, not only to Canadians but to other American readers, she will increasingly count as an American writer.

She is Mrs. Adams Beck, daughter of Admiral Moresby, the British naval officer best known as the explorer of New Guinea. He was the son of Sir Fairfax Moresby, who served under Nelson at Trafalgar. Nelson, of course, is the principal person, next to Lady Hamilton, in E. Barrington's book, "The Divine Lady." Sir Fairfax Moresby's wife, as a young girl, knew Lord Byron—the subject of E. Barrington's "Glorious Apollo."

The Moresbys can be found in English annals as far back as the century of "Ivanhoe." Their soil is Cumberland. The Admiral, Mrs. Adams Beck's father, married a Scotswoman, of a family bearing the same arms as the Buccleuchs, who died comparatively young. Mrs. Adams Beck was herself married very young.

While still a young woman Mrs. Adams Beck adopted a diet favored by advanced religious disciples of the Orient. She eats only salads, nuts, fruits and the cereal grains; she drinks only milk or water. She asserts that fatigue, physical or mental, is unknown to her, although she writes "at the utmost speed of which my hand is capable" and produces books in record-breaking time. "Thus 'Glorious Apollo' was begun the twenty-third of

November, 1924, and finished the twenty-sixth of December, 1924, taking just over a month, and with the interruption of Christmas thrown in. 'The Divine Lady' took a few days less than a month."

Mrs. Adams Beck went to the Orient as a young woman, and, being already committed to a favorable diet, received from the teachers of India and China some assurance of attaining to understanding of Eastern religion and philosophy, and to mastery in them. She studied with Tibetan monks; in the preface to "The Splendour of Asia" she speaks of having studied the later interpretation of Buddha's teaching with Japanese scholars, "with whom I have translated the Buddhist Psalms of Shinran Shonin."

In 1914, a Japanese expert in divination, using the old Chinese method of ivory and ebony cubes, emphasized a prophecy: "Before you, in a few years' time, lies a great, an astounding success."

One day five years later Mrs. Adams Beck sat in a crowded hotel reception room, writing. A story "wrote itself." Immediate acceptance by the *Atlantic Monthly* rounded out the miracle.

She had found England uncomfortably altered after the war and set out with the intention of revisiting Japan. Going by way of Canada, she got as far as Victoria, British Columbia. Winding bays with hilly shores attracted her; she found the place beautiful and quiet. She has lived there since in a house full of Oriental furniture.

She cannot write a Barrington and a Beck book at the same time. They alternate. "I sit down pen in hand, and I cannot tell whether it will be Beck or Barrington. It comes as a memory comes, clear and undisputed. Whether it be L. Adams Beck describing the life and thought of India two thousand years ago, or E. Barrington, at home in the French and English society of the

eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there is no effort; it is only, as it were, to remember and relate."

Mrs. Adams Beck is a public speaker of considerable experience. Every fortnight she gives at her home in Victoria a tea for fifty or more friends to whom she talks, without preparation, on some psychic, literary or historical topic; the function being the same inner source that works while she writes.

II

To consider E. Barrington first:

This is, presumably, the inherited and recessive personality. Her mother was Jane W. Scott of the Scotts of Buccleuch, running back in the history of Scotland to the thirteenth century. E. Barrington's subjects, however, have been almost entirely from English history. A series of story-essays dealing with such subjects as Mrs. Elizabeth Pepys and Swift's Stella were collected in a volume called " 'The Ladies!' " (1922) and this was followed by a companion collection, "The Gallants" (1924). The first novel, "The Chaste Diana" (1923) is prefaced as follows:

This romance of "The Beggar's Opera" introduces many real persons but all imaginatively treated. Lord Baltimore, "the American Prince," as he was called at the time in society, has come down to us with a reputation for heartlessness of which I have made the most, and it would be difficult for any novelist to exaggerate the whims of the famous and beautiful Duchess of Queensberry—or Queensbury, as I have preferred to spell her title, that being her own and (generally speaking) the contemporary method. The Duke of Bolton's marriage I have antedated. My picture of the Royalties is fully sanctioned by history. As to the charming figure of Lavinia Fenton, it offers a wide field to the imagination,

and will doubtless from time to time be filled in according to the man that draws it and the mind that conceives it, for there are few records. But what is known of her story is compatible with the picture I present.

Best-selling records were put in danger by the next E. Barrington novel, "The Divine Lady" (1924). This is the author's explication:

As I sat, years ago, in the Admiral's cabin of Nelson's flagship, the *Foudroyant,* the thought of this romance came to me, for this ship was the sea-shrine of that great but errant passion. She is a wreck now, her stranded ribs are green with weed, her bones are broken in the wash of the tide. A grave at sea amidst the answering thunder and flash of guns would have been a nobler ending.

But the story, with all its love, cruelty and heroism, remains alike beyond oblivion, condemnation or pardon. It is. It has its niche beside the other great passions which have molded the world's history. For if Nelson knew himself when he declared that Emma was part and parcel of the fire breaking out of him, without her inspiration Trafalgar might not have been.

I have treated it imaginatively, yet have not, as I think, departed from the essential truth which I have sought in many famous biographies such as Mahan's, Sichel's, Laughton's and others.

Yet the best biographies of Emma are the lovely portraits Romney left of his Divine Lady, and of Nelson the best is the sea-cathedral, the Victory, at rest in the last home port he sailed from to his splendid doom. From these all the rest of the story might well be reconstructed.

The next book offered difficulties of honest statement which few novelists would have cared to face. E. Barrington managed to tell the facts about Byron without

offense. She says, of "Glorious Apollo" (1925), the popularity of which equaled its predecessor:

In writing the life of Byron in the form of a novel I have endeavored, as in "The Divine Lady" and in my other books, to touch biography with imagination and to present the essential truth as I see it, clothing the historic record with speech and action. From historic truth I have never knowingly departed, having consulted the best sources of information, such as Lord Lovelace, Miss Mayne, Moore, and many other authorities.

The letters though often condensed are all authentic, with the exception of a note from Lady Melbourne to Miss Milbanke in Chapter VI. Miss Milbanke's verses are also imaginary. I do not know whether any of her verses (which Byron commended) have survived.

The sequence of events must be crowded into a smaller stage than that set by Life, the great Romancer, and therefore exactitude in dates is sometimes impossible.

It has not been my part to moralize this tremendous story, but simply to set down the facts and their issues as I see them.

"Glorious Apollo" was followed by "The Exquisite Perdita" (1925), founded on the life of the beautiful actress, Perdita Robinson, who became the mistress of the Prince of Wales, afterward George IV., and had much cause to regret the connection. Among the actual persons drawn into the story are Richard Brinsley Sheridan, author of "The School for Scandal"—the hero of the novel—and his wife, Elizabeth Linley, of fame as a singer.

"The Thunderer" (1927) is perhaps inaptly named. It is not so much the story of Napoleon and Josephine, as the story of Josephine from her first meeting with Napoleon to the finale. As a novel about Napoleon it is unsatisfactory—though one may ask what novel about

Napoleon *could* be satisfactory. The end offers problems of foreshortening and condensation that are bravely if somewhat unsuccessfully met. These considerations will not lessen in the slightest the enjoyment of most readers. The canvas is crowded with historical figures, all brought to life, including Marie Louise, whom Napoleon married after divorcing Josephine, and the Countess Walewska, whom also he loved much.

Taking these books of E. Barrington's as a whole, it is doubtful whether history and biography were ever more successfully vivified for the mass of readers. The measure of this popular success appears to lie wholly in the choice of subject. Given a Lady Hamilton, a Byron, or a Josephine, and E. Barrington will head the best sellers. With a protagonist less famous or of less fascinating complexity, the success will be more moderate. From the artistic and literary viewpoints these books are not without defects. They suggest—as novels—too much contrivance, owing to the unfortunate necessity of accounting for actual facts and events. They are too hurried, from the need of covering much ground. They are overcrowded, and introduce and discard characters with a freedom possible for life but implausible in fiction.

III

L. Adams Beck is the dominant and acquired personality. Its first assertion crystallized in a book of short stories, "Dreams and Delights" (1920), with the following preface:

These stories of dreams and delights in breathless jungles of Ceylon, among Himalayan mountains, by Chinese seas, in ancientries beneath dead suns and withered moons, are in truth the soul's longing to behold the White Swan of the World when in dim twilights of dawn and

evening she spreads her wings for flight. And because to such wings time and distance are nothing I have gathered one feather dropped on Dartmoor as she soared to Gaurisankar, where, on the highest peak of earth, circled by great stars, the Mystic Mother of India dreams her divine dream as the ages unroll beneath her feet. The Snowy Goddess, She Who Is Very Woman of very woman, knows that whether by Thames or Ganges, Mississippi, Yang-Tze, or rolling Nile, Her daughters are the same, yesterday, to-day and forever, and holding in their hands the hearts of men, so fulfill Her purpose. And because no true story can be told without this knowledge, I set Her name at the beginning of these dreams and delights, invoking devoutly the protection and inspiration of Her who is at once Eve and Lilith, Athene and Aphrodite, Parvati and Kali, Virgin, Mother, and Destroyer, but in all forms and incarnations, Enchantress and Conqueror of men.

Next came a novel, "The Key of Dreams" (1922), a love story of the Orient. A man seeking inspiration for his pen in the East finds the inspiration in a woman who is the Key of that antiquity which haunts but eludes him.

The third book, another collection of tales, "The Ninth Vibration" (1922), contains L. Adams Beck's own favorite story of this type, " 'How Great Is the Glory of Kwannon!' " This is the legend of a Japanese emperor who refused to marry until he could find "a maiden of blossom and dew, with a heart as calm as moonlight." Finally he is guided into a forest and finds a blind girl of exquisite virtue but great physical ugliness—and is enabled to see her with the eyes of the soul.

"The Perfume of the Rainbow and Other Stories" (1923) is an "attempt to conserve the perfume of the rainbow, where all the chorded colors are the spirits of the flowers that have perished on earth to live forever in

the blue gardens of heaven. It is an effort to treasure a lost echo of the music of great sunsets and awful dawns breaking upon Himalayan peaks or burning on the reaches of enchanted rivers. . . . And because the rainbow shines sometimes against a livid cloud, I have told one story of horror."

"The Treasure of Ho" (1924) is laid in China and includes stirring scenes from the Boxer Rebellion. The treasure of the title, the author says, is historical, "nor have I exaggerated its enormous value. Many of the incidents of this romance are historical also, and the so-called magical events have been seen and authenticated by travelers in the Orient for many generations."

"The Way of Stars" (1925) is a departure. The background is Egypt, the theme is reincarnation. "If the outward body of a nation dies, is it possible that its soul, that which made it a people, shall, like the soul of a man, live on . . . return . . . ?"

"The Splendour of Asia" (1926) is the life of Buddha.

I have endeavored in this book to make not only the story but the teaching of Buddha intelligible and human. . . . The teaching of the Indian Prince has indeed nothing to dread from science. Sir Edwin Arnold's beautiful "Light of Asia" ends very early in that great ministry, and I have continued the story to the death of the Buddha, and have enriched it with many scriptures and ancient traditions unknown to or unused by Sir Edwin. . . . I can scarcely hope to satisfy scholars and the general public. But if I succeed in interesting some of the latter, the former will, I think, recognize that my aim was justified.

It was in 1926 that the third personality, "Louis Moresby," came before the public as the author of "The Glory of Egypt." "Rubies," by Louis Moresby, was published in 1927.

Manifestly it is too early to make definite statements about this third chain of books, or the personality which they express. Other personalities seem likely to assert themselves, and this author may end by having more heads than Shiva has arms. What can be decided, however, as to L. Adams Beck?

From the standpoint of those sympathetic to Eastern lore, she is marvelously successful. Although there is a measure of external action in these tales—indeed, it is abundant in such a book as "The Treasure of Ho"—the mystical religious impulse is the main motif. The chief defect seems to be one common to, and perhaps inevitable in, such presentations of Oriental wisdom and faith. In the East rhapsodical expression is the only form of expression in dealing with religious ideas. Thus the life of Buddha cannot be described except in what we of the West regard as flowery language—over-flowered and swooning in sensuous images. L. Adams Beck has carried this form of statement over into English, a language which does not easily submit to such ravishment. Therefore the effect of "The Splendour of Asia," and the other books, is totally missing with a large number of readers. On the other hand, were she to use the continence of the best English prose, those whom she attracted to Orientalism would find no other literature of the same sort, and would have to learn the language of rhapsody anyway. Perhaps it is as well to immerse them in it at once. . . . That this immersion oftens takes effect is shown by the increasing and constant audience for the L. Adams Beck books. The latest of these, "The House of Fulfilment" (1927), seems to bridge somewhat the gulf which new readers must leap across. A group of English people sojourning in Kashmir are brought in touch with the marvels of ascetic performance. "The supernormal happenings in this romance," says the author's foreword, "are

true to and are founded upon the ancient Indian philosophy of the Upanishads."

Books by E. Barrington

1922. "The Ladies!" *Atlantic Monthly Press. Little, Brown.*
1924. The Gallants. *Atlantic Monthly Press. Little, Brown.*
1923. The Chaste Diana. *Dodd, Mead.*
1924. The Divine Lady. *Dodd, Mead.*
1925. The Exquisite Perdita. *Dodd, Mead.*
1925. Glorious Apollo. *Dodd, Mead.*
1927. The Thunderer. *Dodd, Mead.*

Books by L. Adams Beck

1920. Dreams and Delights. Short stories. *Dodd, Mead.*
1922. The Key of Dreams. *Dodd, Mead.*
1922. The Ninth Vibration. Short stories. *Dodd, Mead.*
1923. The Perfume of the Rainbow. Short stories. *Dodd, Mead.*
1924. The Treasure of Ho. *Dodd, Mead.*
1925 The Way of Stars. *Dodd, Mead.*
1926. The Splendour of Asia. *Dodd, Mead.*
1927. The House of Fulfilment. *Cosmopolitan.*

Books by Louis Moresby

1926. The Glory of Egypt. *Doran.*
1927. Rubies. *Doran.*

Sources on E. Barrington (L. Adams Beck)

Articles have appeared in recent years in the *Cosmopolitan Magazine* (by Frazier Hunt), in *MacLean's Monthly* (Canada) and in the *International Book Review* (no longer published). "The Divining Lady, E. Barrington," by Grant Overton, appeared in the *Bookman* in 1926.

"Glorious Apollo and the Exquisite Perdita," by Jean West Maury, on the first page, Book Section, of the Boston *Evening Transcript* for September 25, 1926.

NALBRO BARTLEY

Her books represent only a fraction of the writing Nalbro Bartley has done, for she became a newspaper reporter at nineteen and served a pretty arduous apprenticeship in the more cheaply priced fiction magazines. A novel, "Paradise Auction" (1917), serialized in the *Saturday Evening Post,* gave her securer footing. The next year she published "A Woman's Woman," which as a book remains her most substantial piece of work. The heroine is a portrait of the author's mother.

Nalbro Bartley was born in Buffalo, New York, in 1888, the daughter of William Hamilton Bartley and Zayda Angie Brandt Bartley. She is the wife of Horace Lerch of Buffalo.

Books by Nalbro Bartley

1917. Paradise Auction. *Small, Maynard.*
1918. The Bargain True. *Small, Maynard.*
1918. A Woman's Woman. *Small, Maynard.*
1919. The Gorgeous Girl. *Doubleday.*
1919. Careless Daughters.
1920. Gray Angels.
1921. Fair to Middling.
1922. Up and Coming. *Putnam.*
1923. Judd and Judd. *Putnam.*
1925. Bread and Jam. *Doran.*
1925. The Pattycake Princess.
1926. Her Mother's Daughter. *Doran.*
1927. Morning Thunder. *Doran.*

Note: An autobiographical article, "Nalbro Bartley's Story of Nalbro Bartley," appeared in the Books and the Book World section of *The Sun,* New York, for May 4, 1919 (page 8).

MARY BORDEN

THE international novel is much further along than most international projects. A seed sown by Henry James and sown freshly by Edith Wharton comes to admirable flowering in the work of Anne Douglas Sedgwick, Susan Ertz and Mary Borden. The tendency to class these three women rather too closely may be checked by the reflection that Miss Sedgwick is the most thorough and exact, Miss Ertz the most entertaining, and Miss Borden the most dramatic of the three. Their similarity begins, and very nearly ends, with an ability to handle with equal excellence French, English and American characters.

According to the novelist, Storm Jameson, Mary Borden is one of the most disquieting writers of the day. "She is barbaric," says Miss Jameson, "and rawly vital under a guise of exquisite sophistication of phrase and manner. She assaults our emotions but not directly; the assault is conducted through the intellect, thus doubling the force of the shock. . . . She is . . . a dreamer, too clear-sighted for comfort, passionate and urbane, savage and *merveilleuse*."

II

Mary Borden was born in Chicago in 1886, the daughter of William Borden and Mary Borden. A grandfather, John Borden, left Rhode Island in his youth to sail down the Ohio River in search of silver ore. Finding none, he became a farmer in southern Indiana. His son, Mary Borden's father, discovered the silver. Sent west by his father and Marshall Field, William Borden became one of the builders of Leadville, Colorado.

He had been a student at Heidelberg and a portrait of him may be found in Mary Borden's first novel, "The Romantic Woman," where he serves as Joan's father. The picture of Joan's childhood in Chicago, including the battles between the Hot Push and the Micks, is largely derived from Mary Borden's reminiscences of her girlhood. At fourteen she went to a boarding school in New York, then to Vassar College. After graduation she lived chiefly in France and England. The war found her in France; she organized and ran a large field hospital for the French army and was eventually decorated with five medals, three French, two British. In 1918 she was married to Brigadier-General Edward Lewis Spears of the British army. This was her second marriage. Her first book appeared the following year.

Mary Borden lives part of the time in London, in a house near Westminster Abbey, and partly in Leicestershire. She has four children.

III

"The Romantic Woman" (1919) was the result of Mary Borden's own unusual experience. Naturally her early life fed a sense of adventurousness in living; the yeasty years at Vassar confirmed her romantic attitude. This eager idealist was precipitated into the reality of the war, the realism of old world societies. Marriage fixed her in "one of the oldest, most arrogant, most sophisticated, custom-ridden, and, in its way, attractive castes in the world—the British army set."

Three years later she produced her second novel, "Jane—Our Stranger" (1922), a book much more expert. "It is not a pleasant story," says Anice Page Cooper. "So deftly and impartially are the characters drawn, with all their inevitable antagonisms, that the reader lays the book down without knowing whether he

feels pity or annoyance towards Jane for her bleak inability to make any sort of adjustment with French life.

"Philibert with his clever, jaunty little body, his exaggerated elegance, his cold blue eyes and his impudent charm; his mother, the exquisite old marquise, who . . . 'was reputed to be the only woman in Paris who could refuse an invitation to dinner in the same house six times running without making an enemy of its mistress'; Claire and all the aunts and uncles and cousins who moved in a world 'beautifully still as a sealed room with paneled walls inhabited by wax figures'—Miss Borden brings to life with impassioned clarity. And Bianca is one of the most alluring villains in contemporary fiction.

"Philibert, who is thought by many to be modeled on Count Boni de Castellane, despised humanity.

It exasperated him to tears. Its stupidity put him in a nervous frenzy. He was animated by a kind of rage of mockery. Everything that humanity cherished was to him anathema. He had been born with a distaste for all that men as a rule called goodness, and was nervously impelled toward that which they called evil. And yet the evil he courted didn't do him any harm. I mean that it didn't wear him out or spoil his digestion or stupefy his intelligence. On the contrary it agreed with him. He had begun to taste of life with the palate of a worn-out old man. The good bread and butter and milk of the sweetness of life was repulsive to him and disagreed with him. He could live to be an hundred on a moral diet that would have killed in a week a child of nature. Sophistication can go no farther.

"And Bianca, who had been the idol of Paris ever since she was a little girl, when strangers were taken to the Bois to look at the beautiful child in white—white fur coat, white gaiters, and followed by a white pom—was a more refined instrument than Philibert.

She filtered experience through a finer sieve. She had a steadier hand. Hers was the great advantage of being able to wait for her amusement and her effects. She was economical of her material. Philibert was afraid of running through the whole of experience and exhausting too soon the resources of life. Bianca was not afraid of anything, not even of being bored. She meted out pleasure with deliberation. She calculated her capital with fine precision, she measured the future with a centimeter rule, and poured out sensation into a spoon, sipping it slowly.

"When lifted from the context, Bianca and Philibert seem to border on the melodramatic, but it is the triumph of Miss Borden's art that in the story they are not only convincing but inevitable. One feels the quality of Bianca's charm even when she drifts into the hotel at Biarritz, a shabby, drug-wracked old woman. It is Jane, not they, who seems exaggerated as the story closes in that weather-beaten gray house in St. Mary's Plains where Grandmother Forbes used to sit in her armchair by the living-room window and nod over the top of her spectacles to her acquaintances who passed in the street."

Jane could reach no adjustment. Miss Borden's next novel was to be about a woman who did reach one. "Three Pilgrims and a Tinker" (1924) is, Miss Cooper continues, a study in contrasts of another sort and "in many respects Miss Borden's most delightful book."

Marion Dawnay, although she was an Englishwoman, was a sunny, exotic cosmopolitan, drifting from pleasure to pleasure, following the sun from Paris to Florence, to Rome, wherever fancy dictated, passively avoiding tiresome things like responsibilities or solemn people, idling in the enjoyment of the moment. She was set down by a casual fate in the English Midlands. Marion hated the blustering cold Midlands, the sodden fields, the flooded brooks, the ugly houses whose chief attractions were their

hot baths. She hated the savage delight of her husband and neighbors in racing against the wind and sleet, following the hounds in delirious pursuit of the red fox; but the country got her, the hunt got her family.

As one watches Marion succumb to the fascination of the hunt, one comes to a vivid understanding of the harsh, rich, damp, sodden charm of middle England. One can smell and feel and savor the ecstasy of a furious ride with the clouds streaming overhead, and afterward the contentment of tea before the bright fire at home with a hot bath as the climax of a perfect day.

IV

The same background is used in "Jericho Sands" (1925), the story of three persons who wrecked each other's lives; but so told that the reader understands and to an extent sympathizes with each of the three.

Priscilla Brampton is the daughter of a man who rides to the hounds four days a week and spends the other three about his stables. Her mother is a gentle, shabby lady who scatters tracts along the highways and summons tramps and itinerant workmen to Jesus Christ.

Simon is Priscilla's husband—young, attractive, torn between his passion for her and his passion for God.

The third of the three is Crab Willing, keen, cool, hard-living, a big-game hunter, a coveted week-end guest, the heir of Jericho Sands.

"Four o'Clock" (1926), a collection of short stories, experiments with a much wider range of material than Miss Borden had drawn upon for her novels. A squinting, club-footed little maid-of-all-work is the heroine of "Beauty," and a delicatessen poet who attains respectability for an hour is the center of "An Accident on the Quai Voltaire." "No Verdict" is the story of a pitiful druggist's clerk who lacked courage to drink the poison that his sweetheart left and sat through the murder trial

shivering with self-reproach. An English law providing the death penalty for the survivor of a suicide pact occasioned this story.

"Flamingo" (1927), a long novel, is another study in social and national contrasts. Peter Campbell is a New York architect with visions, practical and beautiful, for a structure to house offices, railway terminals, what-not. He oscillates between the highest realms of the imagination and the lowest levels of jazz-mad negro cabarets. His wife, wholly unimaginative and therefore rather selfish, moves in a smug social life.

On the same ship bound for America are the five other principals. Victor Joyce, a highly-complacent British statesman, goes on a mission to the President of the United States. His wife, who accompanies him, has in many respects the mind of a man. Unmarried, she would probably have become an engineer. As it is, she manages her husband's political campaigns with great skill. Her natural interests make her a mental complement of Peter Campbell.

Lady Bridget Prime, a beautiful divorcee, Ikey Daw, and Gussie Green complete the cast. Daw is an immensely wealthy man, a good friend and a bad enemy. Gussie Green is an American dancer to whom Daw is attracted. But after the end of the voyage she prefers Peter Campbell. This preference angers Daw and makes him oppose Peter's dream of the great building. The dream falls irrecoverably to the ground. "Flamingo," as a title refers to this vision of Peter Campbell's—the flamingo being a bird rare and beautiful, well-known to most, actually seen by few.

"A dreamer, too clear-sighted for comfort." Perhaps it would be impossible to characterize Mary Borden better.

Books by Mary Borden

** Of first importance
* Of next importance

1919. The Romantic Woman. *Knopf.*
1922. ** Jane—Our Stranger. *Knopf.*
1924. * Three Pilgrims and a Tinker. *Knopf.*
1925. * Jericho Sands. *Knopf.*
1926. ** Four o'Clock. Short stories. *Doubleday.*
1927. ** Flamingo. *Doubleday.*

Sources on Mary Borden

"Mary Borden of the Younger Generation," by Anice Page Cooper. Front page of the book section of the Boston *Evening Transcript* for July 23, 1927. Quoted in part in this chapter.

ALICE BROWN

American literature would lack a branch of vigor if deprived of the New England spinster. Not to catalogue completely, we should have no Emily Dickinson, no Amy Lowell, no Sarah Orne Jewett. But why "New England" spinster? Are there not Willa Cather and Zona Gale in our midst? It might be pointed out that Miss Cather first acquired her method from Miss Jewett, and that the Gales came from Massachusetts; but the argument need not be pressed so anxiously. The marked individual character of New England and the eminence of spinsters in literature (from Jane Austen's day to ours) are scarcely deniable.

If Alice Brown does not rank with these ladies, still she belongs in their company, not only by virtue of her New England spinsterhood but by manifestations of the same vigorousness of mind, fine perception, integrity of purpose and poetic feeling. Best-known for her novels and short stories, she is the author of plays and poems that have had some attention. An intimate of the poet, Louise Imogen Guiney, with whom she wrote a study of Stevenson, Miss Brown lived to write a charming account of her friend.

Alice Brown was born at Hampton Falls, New Hampshire, in 1857, the daughter of Levi Brown and Elizabeth Lucas Brown. At eighteen she was graduated from the Robinson Seminary at Exeter, New Hampshire, and then taught school for several years, "hating it more and more every minute." In an autobiographical article she explains: "Fearing Double Entry and Dissatisfied Parents, you pick up your petticoats (for there were petticoats

then, and you had to pick them up to run) and you scud off to Boston and into the very odd precincts of the mind where books are written. And since people seem to have a liking for New England stories, you fall into the habit of writing them. . . . Then you write some novels, but somehow, when you come on them in print, they never seem quite right. There was always something you wanted to get into them and it never was there. What was it? You don't know."

There was a little more to it than that. For years Miss Brown had a tedious job rewriting stuff from new books and magazines for the *Youth's Companion.* Courage was required to throw over her certainty as a teacher.

Into the quiet of her life spectacular success intruded for an instant in 1914. Winthrop Ames, himself a New Englander, had offered a prize of $10,000 for the best play by an American writer. Nearly 1,700 plays were entered and Miss Brown's "Children of Earth," a New England drama, was adjudged the best. "You have one big splendor of a moment rehearsing your own play with Mr. Winthrop Ames, and that is too exciting to be thought about at the time, lest you die of surfeit, but has to be saved for the days when you sit with your snuff box by the fire. But Broadway closes its eyes and ears, and suddenly you learn for good and all that doors are not always to be swung wide, and that sometimes, when they seem to be, one is only caught in them disastrously, and that if you write books and plays there is only one happiness you can expect: that of the hourly enchantment of the writing itself, for then you are living in your dream."

Except for summers on a farm in New Hampshire or in a country place at Newburyport, Miss Brown has long been a resident of Pinckney Street in Boston. "The last twenty-five years of the chronicle you live in an old Bos-

ton house where E. P. Whipple used to live, and still walks. For sometimes on a quiet evening a door swings open and a visitor will say: 'How these old houses get warped by modern heating!' But you reply: 'It isn't the heating. Sit down, Mr. Whipple.' "

II

Both as a short story writer and a novelist Miss Brown tends to embody in her situations some ethical problem. Her best and most popular novel, "The Prisoner" (1916), is the most felicitous example. This is the story of a relatively young man who has just come out of prison and must make his readjustment to the world. Jeff finds his obstacle, not in the fact that he went to prison, but in the prior fact of having been outside the law. The commission of a crime is merely the consequence of a man's having cut himself off in mind and spirit and imagination from his fellows. Human society is a fellowship with a creed that in its essence is spiritual and in its entirety cannot be articulated. We make laws to state what is *not* in the creed, since we cannot articulate all that is in it. Prisons are in one sense, and a very important, society's effort to help the criminal. The four brick walls give him no physical or bodily escape; the hope is that they will turn him in upon himself so that his escape will be mental, so that he will see himself standing outside the human community and take the necessary resolution to come back into it. For that is a step that only he can take. To put him in circumstances where he may ponder the matter is all that society can do.

This searching psychological view is what Miss Brown has to offer us in "The Prisoner." In presenting it she does not escape abstruseness, but the book is worth the pains it takes to read it. Although Jeff, burdened with his message, is not very convincing as a person, he is sur-

rounded by four or five people whose reality cannot be gainsaid. Among them is a grandmother who remains rigid and motionless in bed throughout the story—but who is perfectly well.

In other novels Miss Brown has had more play for humor. "The Wind Between the Worlds" (1920), dealing with the question of possible communication with the dead, has some priceless moments. "Dear Old Templeton" (1927) presents a man of forty, "a very imperfectly put together organism of laziness, tolerance, love of small things, and an unspoken adoration of the greater things he never mentioned, if he could help it, because they struck him as being too appallingly splendid for human eyes to stare at or human minds to fathom." In "The Mysteries of Ann" (1925) a spinster of sixty with a taste for detective stories swears she could commit a murder and cover her tracks far more cleverly than the murderers of whom she reads. Then comes a murder and suspicion falls on her.

"Charles Lamb," a play in five acts published in 1924, incorporates in the text many of Lamb's characteristic sayings and introduces his friends, Hazlitt, Coleridge and Leigh Hunt. The play, says the preface, "is not meant to chronicle the weather that beat upon Charles Lamb and his beloved Mary, but the stoutness of heart with which they met it."

BOOKS BY ALICE BROWN

*** Of first importance
** Of next importance
* Third in importance

FOOLS OF NATURE.
MEADOW-GRASS. New England stories. *Houghton Mifflin.*
BY OAK AND THORN. English travels.
LIFE OF MERCY OTIS WARREN.

* The Road to Castaly. Poems. Republished, 1917. *Macmillan.*

The Day of His Youth. Novelette. *Houghton Mifflin.*

Robert Louis Stevenson: A Study (with Louise Imogen Guiney).

Tiverton Tales. *Houghton Mifflin.*

The Mannerings. Novel. *Houghton Mifflin.*

High Noon. Novel. *Houghton Mifflin.*

Paradise. Novel. *Houghton Mifflin.*

1901. The King's End.

1901. Margaret Warrener. Novel. *Houghton Mifflin.*

1906. The County Road. Novel. *Houghton Mifflin.*

1906. The Court of Love. Novel. *Houghton Mifflin.*

1908. Rose MacLeod. Novel. *Houghton Mifflin.*

1909. The Story of Thyrza.

1910. Country Neighbors. Short stories.

1910. John Winterbourne's Family. Novel. *Houghton Mifflin.*

1911. The One-Footed Fairy and Other Stories. *Houghton Mifflin.*

1912. The Secret of the Clan. Story for girls. *Macmillan.*

1912. * My Love and I. Novel first published as "by Martin Redfield." *Macmillan.*

1913. *** Vanishing Points. Short stories. *Macmillan.*

1913. Robin Hood's Barn. Novel. *Macmillan.*

1915. ** Children of Earth. Play. *Macmillan.*

1916. *** The Prisoner. Novel. *Macmillan.*

1917. ** Bromley Neighborhood. Novel. *Macmillan.*

1918. *** The Flying Teuton and Other Stories. *Macmillan.*

1919. The Black Drop. War novel. *Macmillan.*

1920. *** The Wind Between the Worlds. Novel. *Macmillan.*

1920. * Homespun and Gold. New England stories. *Macmillan.*

1921. ** Louise Imogen Guiney: A Study. *Macmillan.*

1921. * One-Act Plays. *Macmillan.*

1922. ** Old Crow. Novel. *Macmillan.*

1923. Ellen Prior. Narrative poem. *Macmillan.*

1924. ** Charles Lamb. Play. *Macmillan.*

1925. * The Mysteries of Ann. Novel. *Macmillan.*
1927. * Dear Old Templeton. Novel. *Macmillan.*

Sources on Alice Brown

"Alice Brown." Booklet published in 1927 by The Macmillan Company which contained an autobiographical article.

FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT

Forty years and something over have begun to fade the descriptiveness of the phrase, "a Little Lord Fauntleroy," but less because of ignorance of Frances Hodgson Burnett's story than because there seem no longer to be any little boys to whom the term applies. In this, perhaps, we have not tended toward racial degeneration.

Mrs. Burnett, as every one called her—she was really Mrs. Stephen Townsend—died in 1924, having nearly attained a birthday on which she would have been 75 years old. Born in Manchester, England, she came to America in her early teens. The family lived in distressing poverty on the outskirts of Knoxville, Tennessee. Her very first story sold to *Godey's Lady's Book* and after some success with the magazines her first book, "That Lass o' Lowrie's," appeared in 1877. Thereafter she lived rather impartially in London, the English countryside, on Long Island and in Bermuda. About 1905 she was naturalized as an American citizen. She was one of the most successful authors of books for children and a facility for writing highly agreeable, sentimental and very popular novels never deserted her. As lately as 1922, forty-five years after the publication of her first story, she published "The Head of the House of Coombe" and "Robin"—a full-length novel and its equally long sequel.

Books by Frances Hodgson Burnett

1877. That Lass o' Lowrie's. *Scribner.*
1877. Dolly, A Love Story.
1877. Kathleen. *Hurst.*

1877. Surly Tim and Other Stories. *Scribner.*
1879. Haworth's. *Scribner.*
1880. Louisiana. *Scribner.*
1881. A Fair Barbarian. *Scribner.*
1883. Through One Administration. *Scribner.*
1886. Little Lord Fauntleroy. *Scribner.*
Editha's Burglar. *Page.*
1888. Sara Crewe. *Scribner.*
1889. Little Saint Elizabeth.
1896. Two Little Pilgrims' Progress. *Scribner.*
1896. The Pretty Sister of Jose. *Scribner.*
1896. A Lady of Quality. *Scribner.*
1897. His Grace of Ormonde. *Scribner.*
1898. The Captain's Youngest.
1899. In Connection With the De Willoughby Claim. *Scribner.*
1901. The Making of a Marchioness. *Stokes.*
The Methods of Lady Walderhurst. *Stokes.*
Emily Fox-Seton (combining The Making of a Marchioness and The Methods of Lady Walderhurst). *Stokes.*
1904. In the Closed Room. *Doubleday.*
1905. A Little Princess. *Scribner.*
1906. Jarl's Daughter. *Donohue.*
1906. Queen Silverbell. *Century.*
1906. Racketty-Packetty House. *Century.*
1907. Earlier Stories (Lindsay's Luck, etc.) *Scribner.*
1907. Giovanni and the Other: Children Who Have Made Stories. *Scribner.*
Lindsay's Luck. *Hurst.*
Miss Crespigny. *Donohue.*
Piccino and Other Child Stories. *Scribner.*
Pretty Polly Pemberton. *Hurst.*
Quiet Life. *Donohue.*
Theo. *Hurst.*
Vagabondia. *Scribner.*
1907. The Shuttle. *Stokes.*
1907. The Cozy Lion. *Century.*
1908. Good Wolf. *Moffat, Yard.*
1908. Spring Cleaning. *Century.*
1909. The Dawn of a Tomorrow. *Scribner.*
1912. My Robin. *Stokes.*

1913. T. Tembaron. *Burt.*
1914. Barty Crusoe and His Man Saturday. *Mofat, Yard.*
1915. One I Knew the Best of All. *Scribner.*
1915. The Lost Prince. *Burt.*
1916. The Land of the Blue Flower. *Mofat, Yard.*
1916. The Little Hunchback Zia. *Stokes.*
1916. The Way to the House of Santa Claus. *Harper.*
1917. White People. *Harper.*
1922. The Head of the House of Coombe. *Stokes.*
1922. Robin. *Stokes.*

Sources on Frances Hodgson Burnett

"The Romantick Lady," by Vivian Burnett (*Scribner:* 1927) is a biography by her son. A rather extended review of this book by Louise Maunsell Field appeared in *The New York Times'* Book Review for October 9, 1927.

CLARA LOUISE BURNHAM

About thirty books, nearly all novels, stood to the credit of Clara Louise Burnham at the time of her death, June 20, 1927. Of these the dozen Christian Science novels were most widely known, but most of her books remained in print [1] although the earliest had been published forty-five years before. The total sales of her stories ran high in the hundred thousands; she had a definite field which she occupied almost alone, and a devoted public.

Of all her books, "Jewel" was the one which attracted the greatest attention and by it she will probably be best remembered. It was Mrs. Burnham's own favorite and she said of it:

"I like 'Jewel' best. I think she is my high-water mark. It is a Christian Science book and without the Christian Science terminology that is used in the story—well, it would be a kind of second 'Little Lord Fauntleroy'; it wouldn't be 'Jewel.'"

This extremely popular story of a little girl was not the first of Mrs. Burnham's Christian Science novels. "The Right Princess" had preceded it. Nor did she always employ the terminology of the Scientists; "The Opened Shutters," though a Scientist novel, is without it.

She was the daughter of George F. Root, in his lifetime the composer of "The Battle Cry of Freedom" and much other popular music. Born in Newton, Massachusetts, and married when very young, she spent most of her life in Chicago, except that for three months every summer

[1] A trade term, meaning that the publisher can supply the book. Many new books, especially fiction, are out of print within a year or two. Unless booksellers possess unsold copies, it is then necessary to hunt for a second-hand copy or have recourse to libraries.

she went to Maine. There she had a cottage on a small island (Bailey Island) which stands well out to sea and is reached from Portland.

It was her custom to "let the reservoir fill" in summer. She did her writing in the winter months at a desk in her hotel apartment commanding a view out over Lake Michigan. Her first interest was music but her brother, Frederick W. Root, of Chicago, persuaded her into writing because "you have a picturesque way of telling a story and aren't too much hampered by the truth." The Maine coast delighted her and gave her the material and settings for much of her work.

"The Right Princess" came to Mrs. Burnham suddenly one evening after she had dressed for the theater. "As I stood in my room, all ready to go, it began to come. I drew off one of my gloves and sat down to my desk just to jot down a few of the ideas; but the whole thing grew so rapidly in my mind that I did not realize anything about me again till I found myself removing one of my shoes many hours later.

"The book was practically conceived and written in a single night. But ordinarily I just live with my characters after they come to me. They develop the plot. My hours are from 9 to 12 in the morning. I rarely make any change in my first copy. My mother used to say that I wrote just as other people hemmed handkerchiefs."

Books by Clara Louise Burnham

* Indicates Christian Science novel

The Quest Flower. *Houghton Mifflin.*
Flutterfly. *Houghton Mifflin.*
The Golden Dog. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1881. "No Gentlemen." *Houghton Mifflin.*
1882. A Sane Lunatic. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1884. Dearly Bought. *Houghton Mifflin.*

1885. Next Door. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1886. Young Maids and Old. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1887. The Mistress of Beech Knoll. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1892. Miss Bagg's Secretary. A West Point Romance. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1893. Dr. Latimer: A Story of Casco Bay. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1894. Miss Archer Archer. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1894. Sweet Clover: A Romance of the White City. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1895. The Wise Woman. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1898. A Great Love. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1899. A West Point Wooing and Other Stories. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1901. Miss Pritchard's Wedding Trip. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1902. * The Right Princess. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1903. * Jewel: A Chapter in Her Life. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1904. * Jewel's Story Book. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1906. * The Opened Shutters. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1908. * The Leaven of Love. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1910. Clever Betsy. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1912. * The Inner Flame. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1914. * The Right Track. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1916. * Instead of the Thorn. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1918. * Heart's Haven. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1919. * In Apple-Blossom Time: A Fairy Tale to Date. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1921. * The Key Note. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1923. The Queen of Farrandale. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1925. The Lavarons. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1925. Tobey's First Case. *Houghton Mifflin.*

DOROTHY CANFIELD (DOROTHY CANFIELD FISHER)

VERY fortunately for her work as a novelist, Dorothy Canfield has been able to find direct outlets for a good deal of her passion as an educator. Thus, although her fiction does not escape didactic moods, it remains fiction. Nor is it autobiographical fiction, as some readers of "The Brimming Cup" seem to imagine; while her use of backgrounds and incidents from her own life is easily recognized by all readers familiar with her story.

That story is one of hard work, almost without respites, but the results she can point to depend partly on her scholarly gifts. She has been called "a woman of letters," but the image called up is not easy to associate with so much tireless activity of an unliterary sort. Having spent part of her childhood in France, she felt impelled to help win the war before most Americans were settled in their minds as to which side should win. And having adopted as her home the State of her ancestors, she must become the only woman member of the Vermont Board of Education. Early equipped with French, German and Italian, she insists on adding Spanish, Danish, Portuguese and others until she seems likely to take her place beside Queen Victoria tackling Hindustani at eighty. Her latest book has the title, "Why Stop Learning?"—a query which may reduce some customers to speechlessness.

Her abilities as a novelist are so considerable that readers of novels can only selfishly regret her roundedness as a woman, teacher, publicist and official. No one, not even Dorothy Canfield, can get breath for work like

"The Brimming Cup" and "Rough-Hewn" while excelling in other lines of endeavor. Mrs. Fisher would undoubtedly reply that living, in the sense of a rich and fruitful activity, comes first. This is decided, of course, by personal temperament; but it involves the sacrifice of the possibility of the highest place as an artist. For art not only insists on coming first over everything, it frequently tolerates nothing else in the race.

II

Dorothy Canfield was born in Lawrence, Kansas, in 1879, the daughter of James Hulme Canfield and Flavia Camp Canfield. The Canfields came to America in 1636, moved to Vermont in 1764, and have owned land there ever since. James Hulme Canfield was an educator, a college professor and president of several State Universities —Ohio State among them. Dorothy Canfield's mother studied painting in Paris and the child learned French about as early as she did English. She was really named Dorothea Frances, but simplified it to Dorothy.

The family was constantly moving about in the Middle West, as Dr. Canfield left one college job for another. From Lawrence, Kansas, where he had been president of the University of Kansas, they went, when Dorothy was about twelve, to Lincoln, Nebraska, Dr. Canfield having become chancellor of the University of Nebraska. At that time an army officer just in his thirties taught Dorothy to ride a horse and introduced her to his hobby, the higher mathematics. This friendship was resumed in France a quarter of a century later, the officer then being General John J. Pershing.

Dr. Canfield went to run Ohio State University. His daughter entered it and emerged a Ph.B. at twenty. These years were an orgy of acquiring knowledge. She saw France, Italy, Vermont. The itinerant educator now

became librarian at Columbia University and Dorothy came to New York for a Ph.D. She specialized in the Romance languages, was secretary of the Horace Mann School, took courses at the Sorbonne when in Paris. She also saw the Columbia University football team play. John Redwood Fisher was captain. She was married to him in 1907. They went to live on one of the Canfield farms and Arlington, Vermont, has been their home ever since, except for the duration of the war and for various European excursions.

A year in Norway has got lost somewhere in this reckoning; Norwegian is one of her tongues. As for the mother, Mrs. Canfield, she took a trip around the world at eighty, remarking that dying on the Indian Ocean would be no different from dying in one's bed at home. This assertion remains unverified.

Mrs. Fisher was not long in developing ideas about Vermont; you will find them tucked away in "The Brimming Cup." Reforestation is one of them and they have set out hosts of baby pine trees on their mountain side while rejuvenating an ancient sawmill to work up the scrub timber.

The two children were born. In a few years the rural schools of Vermont were to have their standards raised in consequence.

As an author of books, Mrs. Fisher had, by this time, three and a half to her credit. The first, a study of Corneille and Racine, was probably her thesis for the doctor's degree. With Professor George R. Carpenter of Columbia she had written an "English Rhetoric and Composition" (1906). "What Shall We Do Now?" (1906) inspires less terror in the young. Her last book had been "Gunhild" (1907).

Now she did a novel, "The Squirrel Cage" (1912), "a singularly uncheerful, grim book showing a fine Ameri-

can girl, too sensitive to be a good fighter, struggling helplessly like a person in a nightmare against the smothering, well-intentioned materialism about her." Her next novel, "The Bent Twig" (1915) was to be a somewhat complementary affair. Its theme is "what happens if too violent a strain is put on human nature to avoid well-intentioned materialism"; it is "what might have happened if the Lydia of 'The Squirrel Cage,' to save her daughter from that inner deadness, had brought her up in an athletically bare atmosphere of higher interests alone. Sylvia, the eager, human, selfish, intelligent daughter in 'The Bent Twig,' flings impatiently away from the material austerity of her home life, and puts out her competent, energetic hands to grasp ease and luxury.

"In this novel Mrs. Fisher showed what she had shadowed in 'The Squirrel Cage,' what she was to paint again in 'The Brimming-Cup' and in 'Rough-Hewn,'— the growth, slow, occasionally groaning and unwilling but sure and triumphant, which carries a finely constituted human being first up to the recognition of spiritual values in life, and then onward to the sense of responsibility which makes him try to shoulder his share of the sacrifice and effort needed to safeguard such values."

Yes, but were they good stories?

They were, reasonably judged. Particularly in "The Squirrel Cage" did Mrs. Fisher succeed in making you feel the intensity of a girl's rebellion and the tightening of the net in which life sometimes catches its creatures. Both novels used the Middle Western background and "The Bent Twig" is a good picture of the university towns of her childhood.

After "The Squirrel Cage" was finished Mrs. Fisher and her husband went to Italy, spending the winter in Rome. Mrs. Fisher became acquainted with Madame

Montessori, helped her with the translation of her book about the training of children, and wrote "A Montessori Mother" (1913) to introduce the system to American mothers and teachers. Then, as a sort of general answer to the many letters she got, Mrs. Fisher wrote "Mothers and Children" (1914).

All the while she had been writing short stories. "Hillsboro People" (1916), which deals with Vermonters, and "The Real Motive" (1917) were the first books to collect these. Later the war was to produce "Home Fires in France" (1918) and "The Day of Glory" (1919). "Understood Betsy" (1917) was written after Mr. Fisher had gone into the ambulance service, in the few months before Mrs. Fisher also went abroad. They then or later sold some of their wood in Vermont to get money for relief work in France. The war caught them up. From it they emerged without casualties, although their little girl had typhoid fever and convalesced during most of 1918 in southern France. It was then that "Home Fires in France" and "The Day of Glory" got written. In the spring of 1919 the family returned to Vermont, tired mentally and physically, glad to do some gardening, to plant more baby pines, and to rest. After a good many months Mrs. Fisher was able to begin "The Brimming Cup" (1921).

III

This very long novel is the story of Marise and Neale Crittenden after their marriage. Though written and published later, "Rough-Hewn" (1922) precedes "The Brimming Cup," and is the story of the pair from childhood until the hour of their discovery that they are in love. Therefore, if one is to read both, he may prefer to begin with "Rough-Hewn." It is, however, a lesser piece of work.

Springing from totally different environments, there is

no doubt that Marise and Neale are destined for each other. When "The Brimming Cup" opens it is with a glimpse of them in their happy hour of confessed love. The scene is Italy, the year 1909.

The scene changes to Vermont in March, 1920. The remainder of the novel covers a period of a year. Marise and Neale have three young children. And the novel proper opens with a moment when Marise is getting these youngsters ready for school. After they go, "she continued gazing at the vacant road. It seemed to her that the children had taken everything with them."

She has ceased to be physically in love with her husband. There comes upon the scene one Vincent Marsh. He is, apparently, a traveled and cultivated individual. Marise and he find much in common and the flame springs up. The rest of the book is taken up with Marise's temptation and resistance. Neale, remaining perfectly quiet, comes nevertheless to know what is going on; indeed, his wife contrives to discuss the situation with him. She must, he tells her, "walk right up" to the thing she is afraid of. Privately, with a great effort and agony, he decides that he must keep his hands off, not constrain her in any way.

With this main story, developed in full and with dramatic intensity, are interwoven other threads. There is Eugenia, who considers Vermont a wilderness of crudity —as does, for that matter, Vincent Marsh—and who would like to capture Neale. There is old Mr. Welles with a story of his own. The life of the Vermont village and countryside are sacked for incident and color. Marise's and Neale's children have parts in the complicated series of tableaux. And all through the book there is a diffusion of ideas of every kind, economic, social, cultural, quasi-religious. Neale's theory of occupation and industry for Vermonters burdens this page, Eu-

genia's preoccupation with lace work, that one. A passage of the sort following is a fair example of the book's digressions. Eugenia has put on some massage cream and is resting.

As she lay stretched in the chaise-longue by the window, reading Claudel, or Strindberg, or Remy de Gourmont, she would suddenly find that she was not thinking of what was on the page, that she saw there only Marise's troubled eyes while she and Marsh talked about the inevitable and essential indifference of children to their parents and the healthiness of this instinct; about the foolishness of the parents' notion that they would be formative elements in the children's lives; or on the other hand, if the parents did succeed in forcing themselves into the children's lives, the danger of sexual mother-complexes. Eugenia found that instead of thrilling voluptuously, as she knew she ought, to the precious pain and bewilderment of one of the thwarted characters of James Joyce, she was, with a disconcerting and painful eagerness of her own, bringing up to mind the daunted silence Marise kept when they mentioned the fact that of course everybody nowadays knew that children are much better off in a big, numerous, robust group than in the nervous, tight isolation of family life; and that a really trained educator could look out for them much better than any mother, because he could let them alone as a mother never could.

We may limit our scrutiny to the three or four principal characters and their interrelationships. The final feeling is then, perhaps, and despite the emotional intensity with which Marise is realized throughout, one of dubiety. Neale is not too good to be true; he is only too good to be truest. He is a type of man most women endure least well since he refrains from aggression when, in their view, it should be spontaneous, an instinctive—almost a reflex—action. All his highly conceived notions

about not constraining Marise, though women may agree with them in principle and as intellectual concepts, inspire in the feminine breast an impatience amounting to abhorrence. Even Marise can be heard asking frenziedly at the back of her mind, at the root of her nervous system: "But isn't he going to *do* anything?" Nine hundred and ninety-nine women of a thousand, in Marise's place—or reading the book and so assuming her place—would prefer a husband who in such circumstances did something, did anything, even if he did the wrong thing.

The explanation is simple. The Marises of the world who show her hesitation do so fundamentally—underneath all their surface of scruple—because of a lingering doubt as to whether they may not, after all, still be in love with their Neales. That doubt can only be put at rest by him. He can settle it in his favor only by some affirmative act, some renewal of courtship, some show of possession or some chastisement of the intruder upon his rights or privileges. He cannot put the doubt at rest by mere solicitousness or attitudes of considerateness or by any form of words.

It must be granted that Marise is no average woman. Such a one would never discuss her plight with her husband in the fashion of Marise's talk with Neale. She would scarcely put herself in the position of going to him and saying: "You are in danger of losing me; aren't you going to do anything about it?" Still less, when he seemed to be obtuse and noncommittal would she continue with what is virtually a cry: "Oh, please, please do something about it!" His piercing glance, his kindly sympathetic tone, his high-minded words would perhaps end the natural suspicion that he was a dumb-bell but only by arousing, even confirming, in his wife's mind the more horrible conviction that he didn't really care.

Another thing. Vincent Marsh, as created by Mrs.

Fisher, will impress most readers as much too cheap a specimen to arouse such issues in the breast of a woman like Marise. It is entirely possible that she would feel physically attracted to him; but either she would admit this to herself and put it resolutely aside or she would yield to him and satisfy the thing that was too much for her. The last thing, one feels, that she would do would be to confuse this physiological need with the rest of living—magnify it, drag in her husband and weigh her children in its false scale, allow it to threaten the foundations of her whole existence and her thought-out happiness. How little Mrs. Fisher knows about the Vincent Marshes is sometimes painfully apparent. Either they are more subtle, particularly in utterance, than she has made him, or much bolder; and in no case do they depend so extensively on the persuasiveness of words.

When the turn of the book comes, Marise makes her decision in an intellectual vigil. Neale's belief that she was strong and not weak has been her staff.

> Neale being his own master, a free citizen of life, knew what a kingdom he owned, and with a magnanimity unparalleled could not rest till she had entered hers. She . . . had only wished to make the use of his strength which would have weakened her.

She decides that when next she meets Vincent she can look and see what is there. The next day comes the encounter in the course of which he kisses her. She does not respond; stung, he asks her if she is too old for love. Marise reflects. "Yes, I think that is it. I find I am too old."

It is singularly unconvincing; all "written," one feels.

IV

Not so many years ago a woman of seventy was recounting the story of Keable's "Simon Called Peter" to her fifty-year-old daughter.

"And then, Cora," she went on, matter-of-factly, "you know, he had all those feelings."

"Yes, Mamma. Mamma, do you think we had better serve chicken patties?" For Cora was blushing. In the front seat Cora's daughter, convulsed, tried to keep her back uncontorted.

What saves "The Brimming Cup" for most readers is the manifest fact that Marise "had all those feelings." They don't pretend to grasp her ratiocinations; and it may be that there is not a good deal in them to grasp.

After "The Brimming Cup" "Rough-Hewn" could hardly avoid a certain anti-climax. Mrs. Fisher's free use of material from her husband's boyhood and youth rekindled the most unjustifiable suspicion that "Rough-Hewn" and its sequel were autobiographical. "It was certainly naïve," observes Dorothea Lawrence Mann, "to believe that a woman who had decided not to leave her husband for a more prosperous lover should confess the fact to the world in a novel."

During 1921 and 1922 Mrs. Fisher worked on the translation from the Italian of Papini's "Life of Christ" (1923) and on "Rough-Hewn." In the spring of 1923 the family went to Europe and spent the following year in France and Switzerland. "Raw Material" (1923) is a collection of character portraits, the material of stories which Mrs. Fisher exhorts the reader to construct for himself.

"The Home-Maker" (1924) presents a family where the wife, an immaculate housekeeper, is unfitted for child-rearing and hates her task. The husband is equally un-

fitted for the jobs the world offers men. When he is crippled by an accident, husband and wife change places, to the relief of each and the great benefit of the children. The dramatic suspense comes over the question of whether the husband can recover. If he can walk about again, public opinion and the laws of the universe will compel him to support his wife; the exchange of jobs will be annulled; both will be made unhappy and the children will suffer. Happily, the doctor, taking in the situation in all its bearings, utters the necessary lie.

Such a synopsis does the story considerable injustice. There is some convincing detail; more plausibility than is managed in "The Brimming Cup." By the time she wrote "The Home-Maker," Mrs. Fisher had come to feel that the rights of the children transcend all other human rights. But she was to offer this view in another novel which offers it without so decidedly asserting it; which, in fact, raises great moral problems and compels the reader to decide them while leaving him free in his decision; and which is much the best book she has ever written up to this time.

This novel is "Her Son's Wife" (1926). It contains Mrs. Bascomb, who arouses in some readers a nearly inarticulate fury. An outline of the story must be attempted here.

Mrs. Bascomb, a strong, intelligent, capable woman is not unnaturally disconcerted to find that her son has rushed into a marriage with a no-account girl. The prospect is quite cheerless; for young Bascomb has none of his mother's strength or keenness. Mrs. Bascomb takes them to live with her—a charity, all things considered. But of course it works badly and her son is on his wife's side. Of this Mrs. Bascomb has no complaint to make; but she alone is capable of solutions in that fam-

ily. She moves away and for some years sees nothing of them.

One day she runs upon her granddaughter. Here is a pretty and intelligent child without care, control or direction—on the road to acquiring all her mother's tastes for the tawdry. The grandmother weighs the situation, decides, and acts on her decision. She invites herself back to live with Lottie and her husband. Lottie, sick of housekeeping, is rather glad to have her, and Mrs. Bascomb's son feels the same way.

Lottie, who has put on much weight, has trouble with her feet. Mrs. Bascomb suggests that she ought to keep off them. "Why don't you go to bed?" Lottie does. The mother-in-law sends for some one to treat her. The man she summons is not averse to creating practice for himself. Lottie, he finds, is really in quite a bad way. Mrs. Bascomb does everything to make invalidism a novel and attractive rôle for Lottie. All the movie magazines. Pillows and delightful negligees. Candy. Delicious and tempting food—too much food. Lottie, who has no pain to speak of, is quite happy. This goes on for years. Meanwhile Mrs. Bascomb at last can take her granddaughter in hand. Her son, a great hand for ball games, finally discovers some skill as a reporter of sport for a newspaper. Mrs. Bascomb sees her granddaughter graduate from high school and begin auspiciously in college. She is a girl with whom Mrs. Bascomb can be entirely satisfied, of whom she may easily live to be proud. . . .

This fresh and powerful novel is of almost startling originality in this respect: It creates a moral problem for a woman that has nothing to do with taking a lover and is yet of paramount importance. Mrs. Bascomb's inspiration comes with Lottie's illness. It is true that she puts Lottie to bed and keeps her there. Mrs. Bas-

comb, and no one else, is responsible for making Lottie helplessly bedridden. The mother-in-law is not without her moments of stricken remorse, but she never abandons her purpose. Mrs. Fisher understands her completely and puts her on paper with consummate skill. Can it be right to do this thing to the mother for the sake of the child? The issue is quite as momentous as that which must often be decided in the hour before birth itself—as momentous and to most minds, more real. And far, far oftener to face.

Other issues not less profound are involved. The Nietzschean one, the right of the stronger, raises its head. The rational one, the right of the greater intelligence to rule, is at stake. Christian doctrine moves to condemn Mrs. Bascomb and then falters, remembering that Christ stressed the sacredness of the child. Skepticism challenges Mrs. Bascomb's premise, asking how she can be sure that her training of her granddaughter is Ultimate Good. Theology bids Mrs. Bascomb to weigh her responsibility, tells her that she will be answerable for what she does, and assures her that she will be judged with reference to her appreciation of her acts, her fineness of conscience, her awareness and honesty.

Mrs. Bascomb's struggle has none of the grandiosity of Marise's in "The Brimming Cup." Yet in its plain, practical everydayness her problem makes Marise's problem seem paltry. Mrs. Bascomb is not a pretentious person and "Her Son's Wife" wears none of the earmarks of an "ambitious" novel. But the character and the book are of a substance few readers will miss, for all the homeliness of the setting and the simplicity of event.

V

She has shown what she can do Now, if the world will contrive to run itself for a little while, she may have a chance. . . .

Books by Dorothy Canfield

Non-fiction signed "Dorothy Canfield Fisher"

*** Of first importance
** Of next importance
* Third in importance

1904. Corneille and Racine in England.
1906. English Rhetoric and Composition (with George R. Carpenter).
1906. What Shall We Do Now?
1907. Gunhild.
1912. * The Squirrel Cage. Novel. *Holt.*
1913. A Montessori Mother. *Holt.*
1914. Mothers and Children. *Holt.*
1915. * The Bent Twig. Novel. *Holt.*
1916. Hillsboro People. Short stories. *Holt.*
1916. The Real Motive. Short stories. *Holt.*
1916. Fellow Captains (with Sarah N. Cleghorn).
1917. Understood Betsy. *Holt.*
1918. ** Home Fires in France. Short stories. *Holt.*
1919. ** The Day of Glory. Short stories. *Holt.*
1921. ** The Brimming Cup. Novel. *Harcourt.*
1922. * Rough-Hewn. Novel. *Harcourt.*
1923. Raw Material. Sketches and the material of short stories. *Harcourt.*
1923. Translation of Papini's "Life of Christ." *Harcourt.*
1924. * The Home-Maker. Novel. *Harcourt.*
1925. Made-to-Order Stories. For children. *Harcourt.*
1926. *** Her Son's Wife. Novel. *Harcourt.*
1927. Why Stop Learning? *Harcourt.*

Sources on Dorothy Canfield

"Dorothy Canfield and Her Books." Booklet published by Harcourt, Brace & Company (1925).

DOROTHY WALWORTH CARMAN

THE best book derived from the Methodist ministry in America is still "A Circuit-Rider's Wife," by Corra Harris, but the next best is assuredly a novel, "Faith of Our Fathers," by Dorothy Walworth Carman. And the sensation it created in Methodist circles was hardly less than that raised by Mrs. Harris's story. "Faith of Our Fathers" (1925) was the first book of a young woman whose father and grandfather were Methodist clergymen and who knew well whereof she wrote. The situation of a minister whose career is very much at the mercy of ecclesiastical politics is pictured with fairness but with honesty.

Dorothy Walworth Carman was born in Cornwall, New York, in 1900 and has lived most of her life in Maplewood, New Jersey. She was graduated from Vassar and was married to Allan Carman in 1920.

Her second novel, "The Pride of the Town" (1926), gives some satirical attention to fraternal organizations, family reunions, sewing circles, and poetry societies. A third novel, "Chickens Come Home to Roost" (1927) records the decline and fall of Ira Clutton, the richest and meanest man in town.

BOOKS BY DOROTHY WALWORTH CARMAN

1925. FAITH OF OUR FATHERS. *Harper.*
1926. THE PRIDE OF THE TOWN. *Harper.*
1927. CHICKENS COME HOME TO ROOST. *Harper.*

WILLA CATHER

THE more beautiful examples of turquoise are flecked in their flawless blue by spots of lustrous brown, the matrix, a link with common soil. What would be an imperfection in another stone in this one becomes an enrichment. A somewhat similar feeling is inspired by Willa Cather's fiction.

The most cunning art enters into her work; but owing to the nature of her material, its effect is extremely divergent. Sometimes, as in "A Lost Lady," it becomes the art that conceals art. Again, in a book like "The Professor's House," the design puzzles great numbers of readers, who pronounce it broken or artificial.

Others see a Stone Mountain and quarry the blocks from which a group of figures, some representation of life, will be fashioned. Miss Cather prefers to carve a little on the face of the mountain. The disposition of veins and colors, the accident of fissures in the rock, are things to be taken advantage of; in their stubbornness may influence the composition itself.

Some one created the mountain; it is well to hesitate before pronouncing it shapeless and meaningless, and there is no certainty that it was intended to provide our toys. Life, too, is a great bulk and a vast upheaval, a creation for some purpose which, perhaps, we do not fully understand. It is well to respect its integrity, to be scrupulous to its outline, to work upon it humbly. If we are very painstaking, very fortunate, we may bring out by our relief some hidden aspect of its beauty, reveal its interior power. If we are artists, that is. For the rest of us life is like the great rock in New Mexico which

bears the inscriptions of those Spanish explorers passing under its shadow over three hundred years ago. *Paso por aqui,* each wrote, subscribing the year and his name. *Passed by here,* we scratch on the rock, with labor—but the date and the name are lost.

II

Willa (Sibert) Cather was born in 1876 on a farm near Winchester, Virginia, the daughter of Charles Fectigue Cather and Mary Virginia Sibert Boak Cather. Her ancestors, on both sides, had been Virginia farmers for several generations, though the Siberts were originally Alsatians and the Cathers came from County Tyrone, Ireland. When Willa Cather was eight years old her father left Virginia and settled his family on a ranch near Red Cloud, Nebraska.

The region was thinly populated and there were few American families. The cultivated land was negligible compared with the tremendous stretch of raw prairie. Most of the country from the Missouri River to Denver was still open grazing land; and the feeding of great herds of cattle driven up from Texas was first in importance. Swedes, Danes, Norwegians, Bohemians, Germans and a few Russians were the settlers; to the north of Red Cloud was the prosperous French-Canadian Colony of St. Anne.

Willa Cather did not go to school. None was near at hand. Her days were spent on a pony, riding about the country. She tried to understand the speech and customs of these immigrants. The fight they were making to learn English, to subdue the soil, to hold their land and to get ahead in the world touched her imagination. Aside from the improvisations of the weather, this struggle was the one dramatic element in her life as a child. She says she could never find time to be bored in that community

where "the life of every family was like that of the Swiss Family Robinson."

Her memories of Virginia were sharp, and are to-day. The impression made upon her was greater because her life had begun in the quiet and the established order of things behind the Blue Ridge.

At night she read. She read a good many of the English classics aloud to her grandmothers. She learned Latin early and read it easily. When later the Cathers moved into the village of Red Cloud, Willa Cather went to the high school, but continued her Latin with an old English gentleman, her teacher. With him she read even after entering the University of Nebraska. She was graduated from the University at nineteen and went to Pittsburgh, where she had friends, first doing newspaper work and then teaching English in the Allegheny High School.

In the summer she invariably went to Nebraska, Colorado, or Wyoming.

While she was teaching, her first book, a volume of verse, "April Twilights," was published, and she submitted a collection of short stories to the publishing house of McClure, Phillips & Company.[1] S. S. McClure got hold of the manuscript, with the result that several of the stories appeared in *McClure's Magazine* and all seven were brought out as a book under the title, "The Troll Garden." In the winter of 1906, Miss Cather went on the staff of *McClure's* and from 1908 to 1912 she was managing editor of the magazine. She was writing little, but got about a good deal, visiting Europe and the West. In the fall of 1912 she took a house in Cherry Valley, New York, and wrote her first novel, "Alexander's Bridge," more justly a novelette. The following spring she went for a long visit to Arizona and New Mexico,

[1] Not now existing.

where the ruins of cliff dwellers and mesa cities awaited her. In the summer of 1915 a tempting offer was made her to write about the war in Europe. She rejected it in favor of Colorado and the cliff dweller ruins of Mesa Verde.

III

Meanwhile she had met Sarah Orne Jewett with a result more important to her work than anything since the removal to Nebraska in her childhood.

Miss Cather had been trying to put the Swedish and Bohemian settlers she had known as a girl into stories. The stories were so poor that "I decided I wouldn't write any more about the country and the people for whom I had a personal feeling."

Miss Jewett was a person fitted to help, both by precept and example. Out of starved lives lived on flinty New England hillsides this woman had made stories that are undimmed to-day. She had done it by constantly considering what could be left unaltered, and by as constantly pondering every alteration necessary to produce on the surface of life some clearer semblance of design. She never tried to put in something, only to bring out something already there. She could undoubtedly have wrung blood from a stone but was content to leave the stone unhandled, drawing your attention to the bluish thread of a capillary, so that you knew blood was there, and in imagination felt its anguished dripping.

"You will have to make a way of your own," she told Miss Cather.

From an instinct of self-protection, because the memory of those people moved her too much, Miss Cather had somewhat distorted and disguised them. Miss Jewett knew all about emotion, having felt it no little. But she also knew what one must do about it.

Miss Cather could have no reason to suppose that the

changed presentation would move anybody, for it was not what had stirred her. The impulse would be to change those very things which made one feel most strongly.

In such changes there was always the danger of tending, perhaps unconsciously, to make it like this or that. As for consciously trying to make it like something else —the kind of story a given magazine publishes, some story you admire—that fails.

Emotion is behind the story, but cannot be expressed in it. What you saw haunts your mind. Without the slightest suggestion of what it has made you feel, let others see it, and perhaps it will haunt them, too.

IV

Miss Cather had begun with a short novel which bears little relation to her subsequent work. "Alexander's Bridge" is the story of a bridge builder who began life "with little respect for anything but youth and work and power." To continue with the author's own description: "He married a woman of much more discriminating taste and much more clearly defined standards. He admires and believes in the social order of which she is really a part, though he has been only a participant. Just so long as his ever-kindling energy exhibits itself only in his work, everything goes well.

"The same qualities which made for his success involve him in a personal relationship"—with an actress, a youthful love—"which poisons his peace of mind and dissipates his working power. His behavior changes but his ideals do not.

"He was the kind of man who had to think well of himself. His relation to his wife was not a usual one; when he hurt her, he hurt his self-respect and lost his sense of power. His bridge fell because he himself had

been torn in two ways and had lost his singleness of purpose which makes a man effective. He had failed to give it the last ounce of himself, the ounce that puts through every great undertaking."

Perhaps the best commentary on "Alexander's Bridge" is that this explication would be necessary for many readers.

"O Pioneers!" (1913) was dedicated to Miss Jewett, with whom Miss Cather had discussed some of the characters. "In this book I tried to tell the story of the people as truthfully and simply as if I were telling it to her by word of mouth."

A woman dominates the book, tall, strong, sensible; not so much kind-hearted as human-hearted; comprehending, with sympathy to serve her comprehension.

We see the girl Alexandra and her two brothers left by a dying father with the charge to hold to the land, the untamed soil of the prairie. The father has made his daughter the head of the family because she has intelligence and her brothers have not. The boys work well but cannot use their heads in their work.

Alexandra justifies her father's faith in her, and by intelligent anticipation makes her brothers prosperous and herself rich. There is a third brother, much younger than the others, who is on a special footing. On him Alexandra lavishes the maternal affection that is in her. When he is involved in tragedy, a woman less strong and less intelligent than Alexandra would have broken. She survives it, as she would survive anything life could do to her.

Perhaps in this depiction of a woman whose bridge did not fall, Miss Cather felt something apposite to her first novel, and better. There is no doubt about the better. The two books seem not to have come from the same hand. "Alexander's Bridge" is fine-spun in places and

consciously psychological throughout. In "O Pioneers!" all is simple, direct, natural and clear. Alexandra's life is a series of scenes in a single but changing setting. The little epochs of the development of the Middle West are sharply separated. But nothing is altered, though much is omitted.

Two years later Miss Cather was ready with another biography of a woman. "The Song of the Lark" (1915) remains the longest book she has ever written. The subject is Thea Kronberg, child of a little prairie town, and we follow minutely her career from girlhood to her success on the New York stage. The action of the novel brings in the cliff dweller ruins in which Miss Cather had become interested; and insofar as Thea Kronberg is an artist affected by certain places and scenes, autobiographical overtones may be caught in Miss Cather's account of her. Music is one of Willa Cather's passions —there was the winter in New York when she heard Beethoven's Third Symphony five times in ten days—but except in this novel and in one or two short stories it enters little into her work. Yet the music in "The Song of the Lark" is only a vehicle; the book is an effort to come at the innermost secret of Thea Kronberg, and to find out what it was in her that made her great. Her effect upon others, theirs on her; the outer appearances and the conclusions of the few privileged really to know her are set before us. There is, possibly, too much of this; too little of the steady disclosure of some fundamental mainspring such as Anne Douglas Sedgwick managed in "Tante." But Miss Cather's strength is not in action.

A year had elapsed between the first two novels, two years between the second and third. The interval now lengthened to three years. Then came "My Antonia."[2]

[2] Accent on the *first* syllable only, *An*-ton-ee-ah, after the Bohemian fashion. It is constantly mentioned with an accent on the second syllable or on the "i" but both are wrong.

For a very large body of readers this novel is the most satisfying America has produced—and without regard to the facts of its place and time. Nebraska, from the early 1880s into the forepart of the twentieth century is, of course, familiar to only a limited number of persons whose number grows less. But a land spreading as far as the sea, and as yet equally untamed; a group of people from the ends of the earth, able to tell stories strange as those heard by lamplight in a ship's forecastle; lightning, hail, wind and drouth and blizzards forever threatening to extinguish families; the figure of old Mr. Shimerda kneeling before the lighted Christmas tree; the coffin made in the kitchen by the hired man; Crazy Mary threatening to "trim some of the shape off" Lena Lingard with a corn-knife if Lena didn't stop making eyes at the men; Wick Cutter, the money-lender, and Mrs. Wick Cutter, painting china; the vital Antonia;—these are seen with the eyes as one reads and live in some corner of the mind afterward. Life itself does not assimilate more perfectly the extremes of farce and repellent tragedy; and the explanation is, of course, that this is life. Miss Jewett's wisdom has ripened in her disciple, and Willa Cather has produced one of the great books of American literature.

Yet "My Antonia" attracted no marked attention when published. The reviews of it, as a whole, were unfavorable. To a certain extent the hour was unpropitious; in the autumn of 1918 something worse than a prairie fire was raging. In less than a year the book had got an audience, however; in three years it had completely transformed the author's reputation; after ten years, it conquers its thousands yearly; and fifty years hence it will be read with fascinated absorption.

A chronicle of people and their environment, a mosaic of character sketches, scenes and short stories, with only such unity as Antonia and the device of a narrator afford,

we beg the question by asking whether it is a novel. The form is that of reminiscence; so is practically all of the substance. Naturally there are changes of name and detail. Some readers are struck by Miss Cather's employment of Jim Burden to tell the story, but the explanation is simple. Having several brothers, she has known the boy's and man's viewpoint all her life. Though it is doubtful if any boy got about more than Willa Cather on her pony, a boy would more easily be presumed to have seen and heard all these things than a girl. As a matter of fact, Jim's effacement, after the introduction, is pretty complete; his sexlessness is noticeable; and there are certainly details no boy would have observed and that a man would not recall. The intonation in some scenes is not in the least masculine.

A novel? "What is a novel," inquired Joseph Conrad, "if not a conviction of our fellowmen's existence strong enough to take on a form of imagined life clearer than reality?" By this generous but exacting definition, "My Antonia" is a novel right enough.

The lapse of four years between "My Antonia" and "One of Ours" is largely accounted for by the fact that Miss Cather did some work on the novel which was ultimately to become "The Professor's House." Of that in its place. Two years after "My Antonia" she published a book of short stories. "Youth and the Bright Medusa" (1920) retains four stories from "The Troll Garden," including "Paul's Case" and "The Sculptor's Funeral," rejects three in the earlier collection, and adds four more.

V

Miss Cather's title for "One of Ours" (1922) was "Claud"; "'One of Ours" was the publisher's title. Claud is a sensitive, shy boy brought up on a Nebraska homestead. He marries the wrong girl. Just as terrible dis-

illusionment is about to claim him, the World War catches him up and takes him as a soldier to France. And by degrees, illusion is re-created there for him. In the end he dies at the head of his men, perfectly happy. This is, baldly, the action of a book in which, as always, action is the least Miss Cather has to offer us.

Although widely read, "One of Ours" caused considerable disappointment, and is possibly Miss Cather's only distinct failure. The favorable criticisms of it bore little evidence of thought; the adverse criticisms seemed mostly to proceed from a conviction that she had no right to make the war glamorous. The day of glory had departed and the day of "What Price Glory?" had arrived. To such an attitude there could be only one answer: Any glamor investing the war existed, as it always exists, not in the war itself, but in individual natures. Miss Cather was quite right in making the war an heroic pageant to an illusionist like Claud. Her fault lay not there but elsewhere.

All the first half of the novel, with its intimate and loving re-creation of life in Nebraska, is as perfect as one would expect. Perhaps for Claud himself, the youthful idealist, Miss Cather hardly captures our complete sympathy, but she has our assent, and thus far assent is sufficient. With the pitfall of his marriage the story begins to take on a tinge of incredibility, and the girl he marries is too little recognizable to be quite believed in. It is perhaps not the wife's blame that Claud is no more fit to be a husband than a six-year-old boy; she probably suffered a severe disappointment, too, when she discovered what she had got. But Miss Cather neglects that side; for once Willa Cather is being sentimental—sentimental over Claud.

While the World War certainly took place, and while young Americans were indubitably called into it, its in-

trusion on Claud's marriage destroys one story and arbitrarily substitutes another. Miss Cather is put in the position of running away from the serious and important situation she has created between Claud and his wife and between Claud and the world.

Familiar with France, if not with wartime, Miss Cather should have been able to produce a convincing atmosphere in the last half of "One of Ours." The fact that she doesn't is partly attributable, one feels, to the intense reality of her Nebraska setting in the first half.

As the novel closes, Claud's mother has come to feel that he is "safe, safe." A paragraph from the end will disclose the false accent into which Miss Cather has been betrayed:

> Mahailey, when they are alone, sometimes addresses Mrs. Wheeler as "Mudder"; "Now, Mudder, you go upstairs an' lay down an' rest yourself." Mrs. Wheeler knows that then she is thinking of Claud, is speaking for Claud. As they are working at the table or bending over the oven, something reminds them of him, and they think of him together, like one person: Mahailey will pat her back and say, "Never you mind, Mudder, you'll see your boy up yonder." Mrs. Wheeler always feels that God is near—but Mahailey is not troubled by any knowledge of interstellar spaces, and for her He is nearer still—directly overhead, not so very far above the kitchen stove.

With its customary ineptitude—honoring an author who much deserved honor for a distinctly inferior work—the Pulitzer Prize Committee conferred its annual $1,000 award on "One of Ours." [3]

[3] Under the terms of the bequest, this prize is to be given for "the American novel published during the year which shall best present the whole atmosphere of American life and the highest standard of American manners and manhood." Certainly "One of Ours" much more nearly met this definition than most of the novels selected, before or since.

But the ground lost by Willa Cather was to be retrieved swiftly, and more than retrieved. The year following "One of Ours" she gave us a novelette, "A Lost Lady" (1923), about which there is nothing but unanimity. Whatever she may do, it is probable that the majority, hereafter as now, will unite in calling this her finest work. It has a shapeliness which is in nothing else of hers, a unity which she has usually had to half-achieve by contrivance, a firmness and a texture that belong rather to the order of natural growth than to the consummate dexterities of art. Yet what art is there! What loveliness, what poignancy!

Captain Forrester is a retired railway builder; the scene is a village in the Middle West to which he has retreated to spend his declining years with a wife much younger than himself. A hospitable household is established over which Mrs. Forrester, frivolous and charming, presides. The whole narrative is through the eyes of a boy, Niel, one of the Forresters' neighbors. Thus it is through friendly, even adoring eyes that the reader watches Mrs. Forrester, sees her slow coarsening, sees the Captain, on whom she depends, age and die; their friends and money disappear; the life that the lovely Mrs. Forrester has inspired about her crumble until she too vanishes, to be heard of afterward only in rumor. Alexander Porterfield, describing the book, cites two excellent illustrations of the restraint with which the story is told:

"The reader watches the house-party at Sweet Water at the beginning of the story without the slightest suspicion of anything wrong until the man who has taken Mrs. Forrester out driving in a sleigh pulls off his gloves.

His eyes, sweeping the winding road and the low, snow-covered hills, had something wolfish in them.

"Be careful, Frank. My rings! You hurt me!"

"Then why don't you take them off? You always used to . . ."

And in that phrase Miss Cather fixes the attention with a dramatic skill it is impossible to admire or envy too completely."

Again, "Niel, unable to sleep one morning, gets up early and goes out into the fields and comes upon a thicket of wild roses, just beginning to open.

Where they had opened, their petals were stained with that burning rose-color which is always gone by noon—a dye made of sunlight and morning and moisture, so intense that it cannot possibly last . . . must fade, like ecstasy. Niel took out his knife and began to cut the stiff stems, crowded with red thorns.

He would make a bouquet for a lovely lady; a bouquet gathered off the cheeks of the morning . . . these roses, only half awake, in the defenselessness of utter beauty. He would leave them just outside one of the French windows of her bedroom. When she opened her shutters to let in the light she would find them—and they would perhaps give her a sudden distaste for coarse worldlings like Frank Ellinger.

After tying his flowers with a twist of meadow grass, he went up the hill through the grove and softly round the still house to the north side of Mrs. Forrester's own room, where the doorlike green shutters were closed. As he bent to place the flowers on the sill, he heard from within a woman's soft laughter; impatient, indulgent, teasing, eager. Then another laugh, very different, a man's. And it was fat and lazy—ended in something like a yawn.

"The characters stand out in exquisite relief—the charming Mrs. Forrester herself; the Captain; Niel Herbert and his uncle, Judge Pommeroy; 'Ivy' Peters with his hard, red face which 'looked as if it were swollen from bee-stings, or from an encounter with poison ivy,' and the unblinking hardness of his small, staring eyes; the Ogdens; and Frank Ellinger. . . . As the reader

watches Mrs. Forrester sip her port before the fire, her garnet ear-rings twinkling in the dancing light, he is almost physically aware of the cold outside pressing against the window panes, the snow and the bitter wind stalking under the black, frozen trees."

VI

"The Professor's House" (1925) is usually considered one of Miss Cather's less successful performances. It ought to be rated as one of her four best books. Only "My Antonia," "A Lost Lady" and "Death Comes for the Archbishop" rank with or above it; and only "A Lost Lady" has the same sense of form.

The form is frequently misunderstood. At the outset we have to do with Professor St. Peter and his family. The Professor is a middle-aged, rather lonely man; a scholar by tastes and the author of an historical work which has brought him a great reputation. The scene is a Middle Western University on the shore of one of the Great Lakes. Besides St. Peter the family consists of his wife and two married daughters and their husbands.

In years before the novel opens there had been another member of the family, Tom Outland, an engaging boy who had come out of the Southwest to study at the University, to develop into St. Peter's most brilliant pupil and to become almost as a son to the Professor and even to Mrs. St. Peter. The World War had caused his early death and, dying, Tom Outland had bequeathed to Rosamond St. Peter, to whom he had been engaged, a protected chemical formula of extreme potential value.

But only potential. However, the right man to commercialize Outland's discovery had arrived on the scene soon after in Marsellus, a young Jew, energetic, educated, generous and flamboyant—exhibiting in a refined personality the virtues and defects of his race. Him Rosamond

had married; and Marsellus had immediately deluged her with the money realized from the combination of Outland's genius and his own. Kathleen, the other sister, who had all along loved Tom Outland, has married a somewhat cynical newspaperman; they remain relatively poor. Some of the Outland-Marsellus wealth has overflowed on Mrs. St. Peter.

This is the picture placed before us in the first half of "The Professor's House," with only so much episode and development as is necessary to expose fully each character and reveal each intimate relation in the group. The novel, as yet, is not tending toward anything; it is exhibiting an effect. These chapters represent something that Miss Cather had never attempted before—a group of sophisticated people in a present-day setting with subtle adjustments toward each other. But although she had never before tried to do it, she might be Edith Wharton in expertness; each character breathes; every inflection is right. As an example one may point to Rosamond and her mother, both types of the woman in whom a sudden and unwonted abundance of money produces a certain superficiality and harder surfaces. Such an effect is usually less upon an older woman, especially if she be a wife and a mother; and Miss Cather delicately distinguishes the difference of effect on mother and daughter.

We are conducted to the point where Marsellus, outdoing himself, is sweeping Mrs. St. Peter and Rosamond off on a summer's tour of Europe. St. Peter too was freely invited to go but has declined; the magnificent and admirable son-in-law somehow gives the Professor at times a feeling of suffocation. The book breaks abruptly into a second part, Tom Outland's story. Going back perhaps a dozen years, Miss Cather transfers the scene to New Mexico. Here we see Tom (her youthful idealist in a fresh incarnation) living the life of a ranch hand

and, with a companion his own age, discovering and exploring a cliff dwellers' city. This magical adventure can be conveyed in no descriptive shorthand; it will suffice to say that Miss Cather communicates all of the boy's own enchantment. But in the end, endeavoring to preserve what he has found and to get scientists interested, Tom suffers bitter disillusion. It was then that he trekked north to acquire an education and—if he had lived—handle the world more gingerly.

The third part of the novel, very short, a mere coda, takes us back to St. Peter, spending a lonely summer and casting up the account of his life. He is fully conscious that he is passing from middle age to the thing beyond. If he lives after this summer he will be an old man. His retrospection centers upon Tom whose loss seems at this time to make everything intolerable. The look ahead is painful.

He had never learned to live without delight. And he would have to learn to, just as, in a Prohibition country, he supposed he would have to learn to live without sherry. Theoretically he knew that life is possible, may even be pleasant, without joy, without passionate griefs. But it had never occurred to him that he might have to live like that.

Nothing in "A Lost Lady" has more poignancy than these pages. As for St. Peter's family, a cable despatch from Marsellus announces the prospect of an heir. All plans for the tour are abandoned; he, Rosamond and Mrs. St. Peter are rushing home; Professor St. Peter knows that shortly the palpitation will resume all around him.

What is the form of this novel? It is determined by Miss Cather's dual subject—the crisis of middle age in a man and the defeat of youthful idealism, which yet

remains undefeated. She wished to show the effect of Tom Outland's ardent spirit on the people with whom he came in closest contact, and particularly on St. Peter, who came to love him as a son. She also wished to show what Ben Hecht has called "the masculine menopause"; and by the contact of St. Peter and young Outland she folded both these subjects together.

When she began to write this book—before writing "One of Ours" and "A Lost Lady"—she started with young Tom in New Mexico. She has always liked to write narrative [4] and Tom's story seemed the natural beginning of what she had to tell. But after some progress she found out her mistake, for Tom's story was monotonous, and except as a piece of high adventure, meaningless. She found out her mistake without immediately finding out how to mend it. The novel was laid aside while she went ahead with other work.

Eventually it came to her that Tom was significant only as he affected other lives; that it was this effect which she had to show; and that she must begin with those lives, showing them as Tom had affected them. And the effect itself? Youthful idealism in America is pretty likely to achieve its material rewards or—and this is commoner—enable some one else to achieve them. Miss Cather wished to show something more tangible than the spiritual effect of young Outland on those others; and it pleased her to contrast in the figures of Outland and Marsellus the two somewhat opposed forces at work in American life to-day.

So she set to work to write the novel as it stands. At

[4] Narrative as distinguished from scenes. Short stories most frequently consist of scenes placed before the reader with only slight connective threads of narrative (or "telling about"). In novels the division into scenes and narration is much more equal; and narrative, frequently disguised or made vivid by the interpolation of short scenes, is essential where much ground must be covered in a moderate length.

once Tom Outland's story lost its monotony and became the veritable "turquoise set in dull silver" which she desired. Coming to it from the sophistication of the first part, the reader feels its dream-like quality with peculiar force. Placed right before Professor St. Peter's retrospection, Tom's story heightens almost unbearably the pathos of that lonely summer. The form of this novel is that of a Greek vase, softly swelling outward from its slender foot, then in-curving with a sharp, sure line

Until its beauty takes you by the throat.

VII

In 1922 a new edition of "Alexander's Bridge" had been issued with a preface by Miss Cather and a year later a new edition of her book of verse—"April Twilights and Other Poems," for she made a few additions. She selected and arranged "The Best Stories of Sarah Orne Jewett" (1925), writing a preface. "My Mortal Enemy," which may be considered either as a long short story or a novelette, appeared in 1926. The scene is New York, more explicitly, the New York of old Madison Square days. Myra Henshawe runs off with the man she loves and we follow her from that moment until she dies, worn out by sacrifices she has come to regret too bitterly. The husband's character is developed as the story proceeds.

For "Death Comes to the Archbishop" (1927) Miss Cather went to New Mexico again—or rather, New Mexico laid hold of her sleeve. She had gone to Santa Fe and its vicinity in the summer of 1925 after finishing "The Professor's House." A subject that she had thought "dead" ten years earlier suddenly and unexpectedly quickened. She returned East to cancel her plans for a trip to Europe and to write.

When, in 1846, New Mexico was added to the United States, the Roman Catholic Church undertook necessary ecclesiastical rearrangements. New Mexico had been under the Bishop of Durango. A French priest in the diocese of Cincinnati, Father John B. Lamy, was consecrated as a bishop and made Vicar Apostolic of New Mexico.

It was long before the day of railroads in the West. The new Vicar Apostolic made the tedious overland journey to Santa Fe, only to find that the Spanish priests refused to recognize his authority. This compelled him to undertake the difficult journey to Durango and back, but the Bishop of Durango accepted Lamy's credentials and conceded his jurisdiction. After that, though he encountered some serious opposition and had to endure no little hardship, Bishop Lamy's vigor, executive ability, courage, tact and absolute devotion to the faith overcame every obstacle. As Archbishop Lamy, he retired in 1885, dying in 1888. "His life in New Mexico," says Archbishop Salpointe, who succeeded him, "was that of an apostle." And "he was easily the outstanding figure of the nineteenth century in New Mexico, without regard to creed or profession," declares a historian.[5]

Archbishop Lamy is in the subject of "Death Comes for the Archbishop." Since for the sake of vividness a fictional treatment is requisite, Miss Cather calls him "Latour." There is, of course, some invention in her story—mostly imaginative detail to add flesh to skeletal facts—but all the more important events of an eventful and picturesque career seem to be presented. Father Joseph P. Machebeuf, Bishop Lamy's assistant, is as easily identified; other recognitions are of local interest only. The important thing is that what Miss Cather is writing is mainly historical; its humor and its drama,

[5] "Old Santa Fe," by Ralph Emerson Twitchell, page 365.

the color of these pages and the achievements depicted are not conjured out of the air but are as actual as the red evening light on the Sangre de Cristo mountains or the Enchanted Mesa or the course of the Rio Grande.

In a sense, "Death Comes for the Archbishop" does for New Mexico what "My Antonia" did for Nebraska; it sums up an epoch in a complete and fascinating picture. But the "Archbishop" has an immeasurable advantage in its unity, the record of a single life, and in its possession of a protagonist like Lamy, heroic and humble, equal in his courage and his faith. It is no wonder that Miss Cather feels this book the best thing she has ever done; the exaltation of writing, with such a subject, does not entirely go when the writing is ended. *Paso por aqui un soldado de la cruz.* A soldier went this way. . . .

VIII

According to Henry James, a novel had to be a "personal, direct impression of life," and its value depended on the intensity of that impression. With the single exception of "One of Ours" Willa Cather has not failed in fifteen years to meet this test. She has her sharp limitations. Plot, in the sense of a skillful and ordered dramatic development, seems beyond her—or, if you like, beneath her. Her feeling for form, though unconventional, is probably unerring, and quite possibly a little in advance of her time. But she is beautifully free from the fads and affectations of the hour. For an example, one principal subject of "The Professor's House" is identical with that of Sherwood Anderson's "Many Marriages." I mean, of course, the harsh transition from middle age to old age. But compare Mr. Anderson's John Webster and Miss Cather's St. Peter. Miss Cather's character is flesh and blood, mind and spirit; Mr. Anderson's, a psycho-analytic hobgoblin. Miss Cather has read

the soul of a man; but Mr. Anderson has confused the matter of Freud's interpretation of dreams and has tried to apply it to a private nightmare.[6]

As to Henry James's demand for intensity, Miss Cather fulfills it more often, perhaps, than any other living writer. What is to be noted is the means by which she secures it. Restraint, frugality; a repose even in crucial scenes; a constant care to avoid overemphasis and a preference for understatement are the practices that give to her writing its singularly unforced quality. She never summons emotion, instead she creates the conditions under which it must well up irresistibly, like the waters of a spring.

Great literature passes beyond national boundaries but takes always with it something distinctively national or racial. We have possibly, in our national youth, had relatively little to offer to other countries in the confidence that it was at once world literature and yet inescapably American. But "My Antonia" and "A Lost Lady" may be cheerfully submitted under any conditions reasonable to impose upon our letters. Or "Death Comes to the Archbishop," if you like; or we may wait a little. After all, Willa Cather stands in mid-career.

[6] Not to do Mr. Anderson injustice, I hasten to say that I believe all the actions of John Webster are a representation of what went on in his mind merely—well, nearly all. Mr. Anderson undoubtedly felt that in such crises the events of the mind are the only reality; and to impress this reality upon us, and to give it its proper importance, he boldly represented it in action. The proper way, I venture to suggest, would have been to divide each page of the book by a horizontal line, putting the acts of the mind above the line, the insignificant acts of the body below. Of course on many pages the line would have been at the bottom.

Books by Willa Cather

*** Of first importance
** Of next importance
* Third in importance

1903. April Twilights. Poems. *Badger.* Republished, with some additions, as April Twilights and Other Poems in 1923. *Knopf.*
1905. The Troll Garden. Short stories. *McClure, Phillips.*
1911. The Best Short Stories of Sara Orne Jewett. Selected and arranged with a preface by Willa Cather.
1912. Alexander's Bridge. Novelette. *Houghton Mifflin.* Republished with preface by the author in 1922.
1913. ** O Pioneers! Novel. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1915. The Song of the Lark. Novel. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1918. *** My Antonia. Novel. *Houghton Mifflin.* Republished with revised introduction in 1926.
1920. * Youth and the Bright Medusa. Short stories, of which four are reprinted from The Troll Garden and four appear for the first time. *Knopf.*
1922. * One of Ours. Novel. *Knopf.*
1923. *** A Lost Lady. Novelette. *Knopf.*
1925. *** The Professor's House. Novel. *Knopf.*
1926. * My Mortal Enemy. Novelette. *Knopf.*
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NATHALIE SEDGWICK COLBY

One may become a novelist at any age. William de Morgan did, at past sixty. Herbert Quick at fifty-eight. Nathalie Sedgwick Colby published her first novel in 1926 when most women of her generation were settling down to a gradual relinquishment of life's burdens; as for any new form of activity, they bade the thought to perish.

But Mrs. Colby started then to write, as if it were something she had all her life been meaning to do and had just got at. First, some essays, then poetry, then short stories, finally two novels. A third novel is under way as this chapter is written.

Is it because she is a Sedgwick? She belongs to a family which has long been associated in New England minds with the Back Bay district of Boston, and through which she is related to Ellery Sedgwick, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly,* Henry Dwight Sedgwick, biographer and essayist, and Anne Douglas Sedgwick, the novelist. Married in 1895 to Bainbridge Colby, and the mother of three young women, she has led an extremely active social life, particularly during 1912-1921; for when this period opened Mr. Colby was helping Theodore Roosevelt found the Progressive Party, and at its close he was Secretary of State under President Wilson.

Mrs. Colby's first novel, "Green Forest," is the story of an Atlantic crossing. The principals are an intelligent and sophisticated older woman and her very selfish and very modern daughter. The action of the book is limited to six days.

This novel was one of the most interesting of 1926, and was so received by reviewers, because of its method.

Mrs. Colby has been described as belonging to the school of writing headed in England by Virginia Woolf. This is accurate, but the tedium of Mrs. Woolf's novels, such as "The Voyage Out" and "Night and Day" is scarcely to be found in Mrs. Colby's pages.

The method itself has been called the "stream of consciousness" method. In Mrs. Colby's "Black Stream" (1927) most of the events and a good deal of the conversation are subordinated to the thoughts going through the minds of the characters—more, are perhaps only represented or reported as a part of that thought. An example:

> But what was the matter with Penny and Agatha, glaring at each other like two angry children?
>
> "You fool! You fool!" Agatha was saying. "I could kill you! Don't you see you've dished me completely?"
>
> Penny had dished Agatha? "But how? When?" After all a girl might explain to her mother. And why didn't Penny explain, instead of hiding his head in one's breast as if he wanted to be safe from his sister?

The method, of course, is nothing new; its use throughout is comparatively recent. Its merits and its limitations may be accurately estimated in "Black Stream," Mrs. Colby's second novel.

The action of the story is limited to twenty-four hours. The setting is New York. The "black stream" of the title is the flood of urgencies and responsibilities flowing through the lives of the characters and draining the hopes, ambitions and energies of these people.

Dr. John Farraday has a passion for scientific research but has to exhaust himself treating neurotic women for the money there is in it. His family, all except Mary Ellen, tear at him to get luxuries in their fight for social position. Agatha, the older daughter, is to make her

début; and her mother is insane over the occasion and over the prospect of a Prince Blavadsky for a son-in-law. There is a son, Pennington or Penny, a lustful, sneaky, soft cub, home from college for the party. Miss Mapes, in starched linen, assists Dr. Farraday, by day with his patients, by night in the little laboratory he has built, with his Great Experiment. She also repels the amorous advances of Dr. Squires, Dr. Farraday's assistant.

Across the street live the Brazees. Jim Brazee, a great gambler in Wall Street, provides his beautiful wife (Dr. Squires has made her practically hipless) with incredible sums of money; Mrs. Farraday is poor in comparison and greatly desires a match for Penny with the daughter, Enid Brazee. Penny is infatuated with Enid. Some little time before, Agatha Farraday has promoted an intimacy between Enid and a married man, confident that later it will serve the purpose of throwing Enid into her brother's arms—for otherwise Mrs. Brazee has designs upon a Duke at the smallest.

Now the outstanding merit of the method Mrs. Colby uses is that it enables her to present a good deal of melodrama without the reader being unduly conscious that it *is* melodrama. The intellectual pastime of reading these people's minds agreeably obscures the preposterousness of the story. For it is a little preposterous that the following should occur in twenty-four hours:

Dr. Farraday achieves success in the experiment on which he has been working for years; receives the offer of the presidency of a university, and suffers a complete nervous collapse. Mrs. Farraday finds out that a friend of Penny's has known Miss Mapes in Paris in wartime, denounces her as a prostitute before several people and sends her from the house. Agatha "comes out." Enid Brazee discovers that she is pregnant and is married, within the hour, to Penny (nothing said about the

license). Mrs. Brazee decides to reconquer her husband, who hardens his heart against her, goes bankrupt in Wall Street, and kills himself. Dr. Squires beats with his fists against the door of the laboratory which Miss Mapes has shut in the face of his proposals. Miss Mapes has her little hour because Dr. Farraday, speaking of the experiment, has said, "You and I," later repeating it after success has been won. There are, of course, minor characters and minor events.

A little preposterous and not a little trite. Told in the usual fashion by an indifferently skillful writer we would find ourselves using the word "cheap," especially as regards Enid and the scene in which Mrs. Farraday "exposes" Miss Mapes. But the effect is not at all of this description. One is kept far too busy hop-skipping mentally to be much disturbed by the material. Here is an easy passage:

"Well, of all things!" Agatha's voice was muffled, then came out clear in the hall. "Mother!" Had Mother seen Mary Ellen's dress? She'd better come upstairs and look at what was going on. Did Mother remember about those large buckles that had been sent back? How she was wearing old ones to-night, and here was Mary Ellen with a new dress. Really stealing, Mother, that's what it was, for Mary Ellen to get money from Father on the day of one's début. Hurry and lock up her clothes and make her return them to-morrow.

"Take your hand off my dress, or I'll scratch you in the face," in a voice Miss Mapes had never heard from Mary Ellen. Her nails were right behind it.

"Don't you touch Agatha!" Mary Ellen was a naughty child, a perfect nuisance exciting Agatha; ought to be spanked; ought to be put to bed; ought to have been sent by her father into the country. Mrs. Farraday tore up her youngest daughter in "ought-to-be" pieces in order to get her out of the way.

"Rats!" A door slammed. On the day of a party, family life was a can of impassioned sardines; no other comparison possible.

The most serious defect of the method is the over-intensification of the story's more ordinary moments, compelling excesses at the more dramatic moments. The novelist in the ordinary manner can on occasion lay a cooling hand on his character's fevered brow; but this is forbidden to Mrs. Colby, who must represent the emotional extravagances going on behind that forehead in all their wildness. The result is sometimes slightly unreal, and it is frequently terribly sentimental. Just as Agatha is all that is selfish, so Mary Ellen is all that is sweet. But the sentimentality of Mary Ellen is as nothing to the sentimentality Mrs. Colby creates in dealing with Dr. Farraday and Miss Mapes. Mental interiors are very unsafe places. The relation between the Doctor and his assistant is too greatly purified in their own minds; for the fact that a mind is fine does not prevent it from being an imperfect awareness. The reader, then, is called upon constantly, in this technique, to sit as a sort of supreme court. So sitting he is bound to decide that foolish Mrs. Farraday brought the wrong charge. Had she accused Miss Mapes of meaning too much to her husband, and her husband of meaning much, much too much to Miss Mapes, she would have won her case beyond any appeal on their behalf.

"Black Stream" is too interesting to miss and Mrs. Colby far too able a novelist to ignore. Innovations are a good thing for the novel. And as practiced by Mrs. Colby, the "consciousness" method is a stimulating one.

Books by Nathalie Sedgwick Colby

1926. Green Forest. *Harcourt.*
1927. Black Stream. *Harcourt.*

HARRIET T. COMSTOCK

In the world of the theater it is usual for a play that has had even a limited success in New York to be sent traveling at the end of the New York run. And it has happened that a show which was a relative failure in New York has been a great success on the road.

Novels a year or more old are often republished at a much lower price. This "reprint" sale has had its occasional surprises, and Harriet T. Comstock's fiction was one of them. Her "Joyce of the North Woods" had sold very moderately in the regular edition. But in the 75-cent edition 60,000 copies were sold in three months. "Janet of the Dunes" was then reprinted, and "A Son of the Hills" put out in the cheaper form. In about three years they had sold, collectively, 250,000 copies.

Harriet (Theresa) Comstock was born at Nichols, New York, in 1860, the daughter of S. Alpheus Smith and Jean A. Downey Smith. She was educated in an academy at Plainfield, New Jersey, and was married to Philip Comstock, of Brooklyn, New York, in 1885. She has been writing since 1895. Several books for children preceded her novels.

Books by Harriet T. Comstock

1900. Molly, the Drummer Boy.
1901. Cedric, the Saxon.
1902. A Boy of a Thousand Years Ago.
1902. A Little Dusky Hero.
1902. Tower or Throne.
When the British Came.
Then Marched the Brave.
1907. The Queen's Hostage. Novel.

1908. Janet of the Dunes. Novel. *Little, Brown.*
1911. Joyce of the North Woods. Novel. *Doubleday.*
1913. A Son of the Hills. Novel. *Doubleday.*
1913. Camp Brave Pine.
1914. The Place Beyond the Winds. Novel. *Doubleday.*
1916. The Vindication. Novel. *Doubleday.*
1917. The Man Thou Gavest. Novel. *Doubleday.*
1918. Mam'selle Jo: A Novel of the St. Lawrence Country. *Doubleday.*
1919. Unbroken Lines. Novel. *Doubleday.*
1921. The Shield of Silence. Novel. *Doubleday.*
1922. Glen of the Mountains. Novel. *Doubleday.*
1922. At the Crossroads. Novel. *Doubleday.*
1923. The Tenth Woman. Novel. *Doubleday.*
1925. Joline. Novel. *Doubleday.*
1926. Out of the Clay. Novel. *Doubleday.*

MARGARET DELAND

An affectionate place in many memories is held by Margaret Deland's Old Chester stories. Old Chester itself, or its original, Manchester, a suburb of Allegheny, Pennsylvania, has quite vanished in factories and tenements. And there was no original for its most memorable inhabitant, Dr. Lavendar, the minister. Mrs. Deland once explained that she blended him from an uncle, the Rev. William Campbell, sometime president of Rutgers College, and her husband. A likeness to Phillips Brooks has also been detected.

Margaretta Wade Campbell was born in 1857, in Allegheny. Her parents dying while she was very young, she grew up in the family of Benjamin Campbell, an uncle, in Manchester. She was married to Lorin F. Deland, of Boston, in 1880.

Her first book to attract attention—and it attracted a good deal—was "John Ward, Preacher" (1887), which appeared in America within a few months of the publication in England of Mrs. Humphry Ward's "Robert Elsmere." Both novels were constructed as attacks on orthodox religion. Forty years afterward sheer caricature in "Elmer Gantry" made a smaller stir.

"The Awakening of Helena Richie" (1906) combined with the appeal of Old Chester and its inhabitants the merit of a dramatic story—in this case, a woman's guarded secret. Margaret Anglin acted Helena in the play made from this novel but the greatest difficulty was experienced in filling the rôle of Dr. Lavendar.

"The Iron Woman" (1911) remains, in some respects, Mrs. Deland's best novel. Her feeling for character,

always strong, had an unusually fine opportunity for exercise in the figure of Sarah Maitland, who could run an iron mill and expand a business but who could not compel the love of her son.

"The Vehement Flame" (1922) aroused a storm of objection from readers intolerant of the marriage of a woman of 39 with a boy of 19. The title is Biblical, a metaphor for jealousy.

"The Kays" (1926), like many of Mrs. Deland's stories, depends for its action upon a strong conviction of sin on the part of a character. The story is laid in Old Chester and Dr. Lavendar appears in it.

In the Kay house, little Arthur Kay grows up under the sternest of régimes. He is not more than five or six years old when he realizes that he and his mother have none of the good things to eat which his father enjoys. He is scarcely older when his mother explains that she prefers not to use his father's money for any of their needs. He is only eight when he learns of the crazy woman in the barred room in the attic, and when he is set to watch the door and to quiet poor Mary if she is frightened. It is at this age as well that his mother impresses so sternly upon his mind that he must never fight and that he must never mind what people say. Somehow Arthur manages to understand. Somehow he has courage to meet the taunts of other boys because he sews. He does not know until long after he is grown how bitter to Lois Clark was the knowledge that he sewed. Lois, who defended him in his childhood, loves him even when he refuses to go as a soldier in the Civil War; and in spite of the death of her two brothers on the battlefield, in spite of the town's hatred of Arthur, she becomes his wife. Whether this story, founded on such an extreme instance, is worked out to "a beautiful understanding" of "stern moral loveliness" or becomes non-

sense is wholly dependent on the reader's religious, moral and social viewpoint.

From living in Kennebunkport, Maine, during summer months, Mrs. Deland has come to make it almost entirely her home, though still maintaining a residence in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

BOOKS BY MARGARET DELAND[1]

1885. THE OLD GARDEN AND OTHER VERSES.
1887. JOHN WARD, PREACHER.
PHILIP AND HIS WIFE.
FLORIDA DAYS.
SYDNEY.
THE STORY OF A CHILD.
THE WISDOM OF FOOLS.
MR. TOMMY DOVE AND OTHER STORIES.
GOOD FOR THE SOUL.
R. J.'S MOTHER.
OLD CHESTER TALES. *Harper.*
DR. LAVENDAR'S PEOPLE. *Harper.*
1904. THE COMMON WAY.
1906. THE AWAKENING OF HELENA RICHIE. *Harper.*
1907. AN ENCORE.
1911. THE IRON WOMAN. *Harper.*
1912. THE VOICE.
1913. PARTNERS.
1914. THE HANDS OF ESAU.
1915. AROUND OLD CHESTER. *Harper.*
1916. THE RISING TIDE. *Harper.*
1919. SMALL THINGS. *Appleton.*
1922. THE VEHEMENT FLAME. *Harper.*
1924. NEW FRIENDS IN OLD CHESTER. *Harper.*
1926. THE KAYS. *Harper.*

[1] Incomplete list.

MAZO DE LA ROCHE

FICTION has ever been a minor content of the *Atlantic Monthly* and whole stretches of years have passed in which that magazine refrained from publishing long or serial fiction. But in 1926 Ellery Sedgwick and his associates announced an award of $10,000, in a contest closing early in 1927, for "the most interesting novel of any kind, sort or description" submitted by any author, "whether born in London or Indianapolis." In other words, all the usual restrictions were waived. The award went to Miss Mazo de la Roche, a Canadian, for her novel, "Jalna." It is easy to believe that nothing better was submitted, for "Jalna" is certainly one of the finest novels of its year.

It is not a first novel. Miss de la Roche had published four earlier books, two of which, "Explorers of the Dawn" and "Possession," attracted marked attention from reviewers. She was the author of occasional, though rather infrequent, short stories that had made more than a passing dent in the minds of some readers. Yet it cannot be said that anything in her previous work prepared expectation for such a rich, fruity pudding as "Jalna" offers.

We may therefore concern ourselves exclusively with this book, her real passport to our attention. But first a few details about the author.

She comes of French, Irish and English ancestry. The de la Roches were French Royalists, one of whom was guillotined in the Reign of Terror. The family settled in Ireland, and Miss de la Roche's grandfather came to Canada as a young man. His wife was the daughter of

an officer in the Dublin Fusiliers. Her mother's people were of English descent, from Devon originally, who, as United Empire Loyalists, settled in Nova Scotia.

"Mazo," says Miss de la Roche, "is a Spanish masculine name. I was named after a friend of my father's. My father promised my mother that if she would let him name the first, she should be allowed to name the others. . . . There were no others."

Mazo de la Roche was born in Toronto, Canada. She was educated privately, "with an erratic dash or two into the University of Toronto." She studied art for a time, "but even while I bent over a drawing board my brain was full of fancies, and I soon turned to writing." She always writes on a drawing board across her knees, and decorates the board with little caricatures of the people she is writing about.

She lives in Toronto and a farm in Ontario, and says her ambition is to spend her winters outside of Canada. As "Jalna" not only won the prize but became a best-seller within a few weeks of publication as a book, this ambition has probably been realized.

II

"Jalna" takes title from the name of a family estate in Ontario; and that, in turn, was named after the British military station in India where Philip Whiteoak and Adeline Court first met and fell in love.

They were a dashing couple, but her health demanded a cooler climate; Philip quarreled with his colonel and grew sick of the army; and an uncle left them a legacy in Quebec. They went to Canada, and soon took up a thousand acres in Ontario where the winters were less severe.

When the novel opens Adeline, the grandmother, is the oldest of the clan living at Jalna. She is ninety-nine and her great aim is to live to be one hundred. Two of her

sons, though both in their seventies, are still boys to her. Nicholas devotes his time to living over a gay past, Ernest to the annotation of a critical work on Shakespeare which will never be published. Their nephew, Renny, thirty-eight, red-headed and masterful and unmarried, rules the family. Meg, his sister, still sentimentally mourns the ruin of a love affair with a neighbor, Maurice Vaughan, although this took place twenty years ago. Meg is chatelaine of the household.

The father of Renny and Meg had married again and the remaining members of the family are four sons of that second marriage, Eden, Piers, Finch and Wakefield, aged twenty-three, twenty, sixteen and nine, respectively. Interred in a deep basement dwell a cockney, Wragge ("Rags") and his wife, Mrs. Wragge, servitors of the Whiteoak clan.

The big old house thus shelters nine Whiteoaks, and two more persons are added to the group in the course of the novel. Yet every one of the eleven is most definitely characterized, is made most magnificently real to the reader. In addition there are a couple of slighter characterizations, such as Maurice Vaughan and Rags. Yet in each instance Miss de la Roche has the sharpest focus; none of these people is like another and there is never an instant's haziness or confusion.

The action of the story takes place in a year or less. Its purpose is to show the peculiar cohesiveness of such a group. And this is shown immediately by Piers's marriage. Meg had broken with Maurice Vaughan, so many years ago, because Maurice had fathered a child. Piers has been holding clandestine meetings with this girl, Pheasant. Renny has warned him to shun her; but Piers and Pheasant elope and are married. Then Piers brings his bride to Jalna. There is, of course, a terrific family scene, dominated by the despotic Grandmother, who does

not hesitate to use the word "bastard!" But in the end, and despite Meg's inconsolable grief, Piers and Pheasant are merged into the family. After all, it is inconceivable that they should let Piers go! This is not simply because Renny could scarce run the farm without him. Perhaps the best expression of what it really is, is Grandmother. She has given Piers a terrific thwack over the head with her cane, making him bleed; but on hearing ("What's that? What's he say?") that the grandson may go to the States, she bursts into sobs. "A Whiteoak go to the States? A Whiteoak a Yankee? No, no, no!"

Eden is a poet. He has got a New York publisher to take a book of his verse. In the publisher's office, where she works, he meets Alayne Archer, who admires his poetry. They are married and Eden brings *his* bride to Jalna. At once we have the whole family re-interpreted through Alayne's eyes. An intelligent young woman, of education and some taste, she is staggered by the abysm of futility into which this group has sunk. But she is perhaps rather too lacking in robustness. The immense hot cooked family meal at midday dizzies her; she shrinks from the avidity with which the ninety-nine-year-old woman eats enormous meals, demands to know everything that is going on, delights in the family rows and thrusts herself into the thick of them.

No need to follow the story further. Miss de la Roche attempts no final outworking of all these individual destinies. She gives us complete pictures, and a sufficient amount of developing action to indicate the course events will take with these Whiteoaks; the rest is left to the reader's imagination. According to his fancy and interest in particular characters, he may construct a likely future for each or all—except, perhaps, Grandmother. The last scene of this splendid novel is the celebration of her centenary.

In especial the two younger boys, Finch, the bony, untidy, hysterical adolescent, and sharp little Wakefield, precocious but highly engaging, offer material for the liveliest conjecture.

The novel is perfectly imagined—exquisite in detail, highly realistic at every point, saturated with humorous perception, complete in the adjustment of parts and proportioning, dramatic throughout. Perhaps the most significant thing is that it is wholly a work of the imagination. Miss de la Roche was an only child. She never saw nor came in contact with any such clan as the Whiteoaks. As an only child, "she has many times wondered what it would be like to live in a large, tumultuous household of affectionate, prying, loyal and self-centered young people, all of whom are financially dependent upon the head."

Books by Mazo de la Roche

Explorers of the Dawn.
Possession.
Low Life.
Delight.
1927. Jalna. *Little, Brown.*

Sources on Mazo de la Roche

"Mazo de la Roche and Her Prize-Winning Jalna," by Dorothy Foster Gilman, front page, book section, Boston *Evening Transcript* for October 15, 1927. Almost wholly critical, little or no biographical data.

SUSAN ERTZ

Ever since her second novel, it has become natural for readers to think of Susan Ertz in the literary corner inhabited by Anne Douglas Sedgwick and "Elizabeth" (Countess Russell). This, of course, is for no such mere coincidence as the appearance of "Nina" and "The Little French Girl" at the same time. The point of surprise and satisfaction was to find Miss Ertz's contrast of French and English Society as close and as luminous as Miss Sedgwick's. No, the association of the three women grew out of the youngest's evident preoccupation with the same material, the same class of people; and out of her equally obvious equipment, mental and visual. Her knowledge, her observation, her powers of penetration were as good as theirs.

If her first novel, "Madame Claire" (1922) was somewhat sentimental in its inclination, the reverse was true of "Nina" (1924) and no one has had cause to complain of over-sweetening in the books since. Miss Ertz can be both amusing and charming, as she showed in "After Noon" (1926) without abating honesty. Like Miss Sedgwick, she knows exactly the difference of three national characters, English, American and French. Like "Elizabeth," she can combine the grave and the comical in the same story. If she somewhat lacks, like the other two, Edith Wharton's ability to create a dramatic situation and resolve it into further and more dramatic situations, in the true style of the Victorian novel, Miss Ertz can extract the last bit of dramatic feeling from the situation she has got; and she can, more successfully than

Mrs. Wharton, generalize her conclusions and make them seem applicable to human nature everywhere.

II

A little stretch—eagerly made—is perhaps necessary for her inclusion in this book. Americans have some right to claim Anne Douglas Sedgwick, who, after all, was born here, of an established American family. But Miss Ertz, concerning whom biographical detail is far too scanty, was born in England, albeit of American parents. It appears they were both New Yorkers. "At a very early age" Susan left England for America. When seven years old she went abroad again and remained in England and France for five years. After that she spent the greater part of six years in a log house up in the Sierra Nevada Mountains of California. "In the company of brothers and a sister I sat at the feet of an English governess who had a liking for adventure. Our studies were pursued in a small cabin, at desks made of rough hewn pine. The mountain winters were so severe that we went down to the milder climate of San Francisco until the snows were melted. I was in that city at the time of the disaster of 1906. But those long, happy summers in the pine forests of the Sierras are unforgettable; and even the rattlesnakes, the dust, the quartz mines that failed to produce gold as they should have done, the lack of water and the danger of forest fires, are all part of a wonderful and delightful experience in surroundings of extraordinary wildness and beauty."

She was now eighteen and had a taste of New York life but went back to England in May, 1914, "to the enjoyment of a few perfect months before the World War." She did war work in London, "a spectator of every kind of heroism except the actual heroism of the battlefields."

During the war she was six months in New York, returning to England to do canteen work for American soldiers from late in 1917 until after the armistice. She now lives in England and says: "I would rather have a new idea, even if it is given to me by somebody else, than a diamond wrist watch, any day."

III

"Madame Claire" is all very well, but the first witness of Miss Ertz's stature was "Nina." It would, indeed, be sufficient comment to remark that this book, appearing almost simultaneously with "The Little French Girl," stands worthily in the inevitable comparison.

It is a quite different story and the comparison must not be pressed too far. Miss Ertz's real subject is the power over a woman of physical attraction toward a man. She recognizes that most nice women confuse this attraction with love—having, indeed, no experience to instruct them otherwise. But she carries her honesty further: Knowing that women are quite powerless to combat physical attraction, no matter how it makes them suffer, she refuses to make a "happy ending" where, in truth and in human nature, none can be.

Brought up by her aunt, Nina Wadsworth falls in love with Morton Caldwell, adopted in his boyhood by that same aunt. Morton is extremely handsome, essentially good-hearted, selfish, spoiled, and hopelessly susceptible to women. Tony Fielding has all the fidelity and devotion that Morton lacks. Henri Bouvier, the son of a French family in England, is a playmate in childhood of these three.

Nina marries Morton and the novel is the history of that marriage—the history of a hopeless and incurable infatuation, if you choose to term it so; the study of a

girl whose love, once given, cannot be revoked by any act or will of her own, in another view. "Till death do us part" is superfluous for many women.

Morton drags Nina through every kind of suffering until she seeks a divorce in the desperate hope that this form of separation will make her again seem inaccessible, and therefore desirable, to her husband—will actually bring him back to her. More divorces are asked for this reason than most of us suspect; there are no statistics covering the honest motives of divorce.

But the delight of the story, and the great wisdom, is Henri. Revisiting England in his young manhood, and renewing his contact with Nina, Morton and Tony Fielding, he is just in time to witness the beginning of Nina's madness, and he stands by until its apparent conclusion. Thoroughly French in his ideas about love and marriage, sophisticated, witty, deeply sympathetic and discreet, his comments, both spoken and unspoken, constantly illuminate the truth of the whole affair, as they enliven a situation increasingly tragic. And in the end, against his racial inclination, he acts. There is only one way of helping Nina; it is to get rid of Morton. Henri does not do murder but he does draw Morton away to another part of the world in a disappearance which has some chance of being final and which every reader will pray is final.

Miss Ertz had shown in "Nina" that constant selection of the right detail, from the feminine standpoint, which alone makes a story convincing to women readers. It is the hallmark, the sterling stamp, upon her two novels since "Nina." In "After Noon" (1926) she has no such grave subject as "Nina" dealt with. This is the tale of a middle-aged man, his well-founded skepticism on the subject of marriage, his upbringing of two daughters abandoned in infancy by their faithless mother, and his mid-

dle-aged marriage. Charles—his last name is forgotten and is irrelevant; "Charles" he remains to every reader—is among the most engaging persons in contemporary fiction. One of his two girls—they are young women when the novel opens—is a serious-minded person with a passion for political and social reform. Returning home from some Campaign or Committee, she airs these views, whereupon Charles observes comfortably:

"My politics have boiled down to this: I would like every one to be able to keep clean and smell nice. Were I a candidate for Parliament my platform would be, 'Bath salts for all!'"

An American widow conducts a long and careful campaign. In the end, Charles marries her. They are very happy. But he makes a characteristic masculine mistake. He continues, on occasion, to utter the withering condemnation of marriage as an institution which has built itself up in his mind through the years as the result of his bitter youthful experience. And when his wife construes these generalizations and bright epigrams as personal to her and *their* marriage, Charles cannot understand her attitude!

"After Noon" is the gayest of Miss Ertz's novels, but it is perfectly sound. With equal soundness, less gayety and more drama she has written, in "Now East, Now West" (1927) the history of an American marriage which was taken abroad and there subjected to an acid test.

George Goodall is a successful New York business man but his wife, Althea, wants to exchange a Park Avenue apartment for a London house, so George goes over to organize an English branch. Althea succeeds in making the acquaintance of very good people, among them Mary Monash and Francis Mortlake. Mortlake is heir to a peerage.

The book develops into a fascinating study of intrinsic

character. George, who adapts himself to English life slowly, proceeds always with honesty and without an ulterior motive. Althea is the most refined type of climber and craves excitement and the gratification of her personal vanity. She is a very pretty woman and a bright, clever woman. Mortlake meets her advances and permits himself the usual intimacies of a close, if passing, friendship. A little love, a little kiss. Althea confuses ambition and vanity with her other emotions, as such a woman will, and allows herself to fall in love with Mortlake. George, who loves her very much, and whose jealousy is real, also makes a friendship, with an older woman of fine heart and great wisdom of life. It sees him through—and in due time Althea presumes upon her intimacy with Mortlake and comes a tremendous cropper.

She has been riding for a fall, and now she has had it. She picks herself up, by degrees. She begins again to make love to George; it is a little alarming to find that a wall seems to exist between them. Again Miss Ertz sticks to the truth. There is no explosion, no separation. George will never love another woman. Althea visibly declines; has now become quite sick of England. So, as the novel closes, they are going back to New York. One sees that Althea is planning fresh and more thrilling conquests. One sees that George, with much ahead of him, will never again have to suffer his agony so keenly.

IV

Besides the novels, there is a book of short stories, "The Wind of Complication" (1927), but these call for little comment. Varying in mood, and including one story of fiendishness more bitter than anything else in Miss Ertz's work, they are all, perhaps, rather the diversions of a novelist than anything of more moment.

We have had four novels in succession from this author,

all far above average in excellence. The only variations in that excellence are those inherent in the nature of the particular material she has to work with. Some subjects, after all, are capable of yielding more than others. Miss Ertz has given evidence of her judgment; none of her subjects is insufficient; and in every case she deals faithfully with the minds and hearts of her characters. To read her is veritably to live other lives, with all their humor and their wretchedness, their worth and their fun.

Books by Susan Ertz

1922. Madame Claire. *Appleton.*
1924. Nina. *Appleton.*
1926. After Noon. *Appleton.*
1927. The Wind of Complication. *Appleton.*
1927. Now East, Now West. *Appleton.*

JANET A. FAIRBANK

No more prosaic title for a novel than "The Smiths" could well be found. It is a little as if Janet A. Fairbank had tried to conceal her book—in spite of which it escaped receiving the Pulitzer Prize for the best American novel of 1925 by the slimmest margin. But it escaped, so perhaps the title was a success.

The novel was, decidedly. Mrs. Fairbank may have called it "The Smiths" in a reasonable despair at finding a really adequate title—or possibly she felt a scrupulous objection to any adventitious aid an alluring or imposing title might lend. What she had done was to reveal the dramatic growth of Chicago from the Civil War days down to our own. The means she had adopted for the revelation was the romantic but serious story of an altogether delightful woman.

She had published, as a first novel, "The Cortlandts of Washington Square." She now took up Ann, the niece of Hendricks Cortlandt, soon after her marriage to Peter Smith. When the story opens Peter has acquired an iron furnace and is trying to borrow money at the bank. The fall of Richmond is imminent. The banker declines to lend. The next day, having discovered Peter's connection with the Cortlandts, he is eager to come to the rescue. But Peter has meantime found the money; the one thing he will not do is to capitalize his wife's family. You see she had jilted an Italian count to become the wife of a mere Chicago mechanic.

The novel is full of vivid scenes, including the financial panic of 1873; full of stirring characterization, too. In the panic Peter helps himself to his wife's fortune and

comes back to find her waiting to offer its use. When she hears that he has already "borrowed" it she is enraged—not at all on account of the money but because he had promised they should be partners in their marriage and he has done this thing without telling her. He is always going ahead as if he were the whole concern! But the next day, talking with Peter's intimate friend, and learning the full extent of the emergency, learning that he is probably a ruined man, for all her stake—she observes, smiling shakily:

"It doesn't seem to me to be the most God-given moment for leaving him." And sticks.

The Smith children add much to the variety of the novel but Ann is its charm. It is a full-length portrait, from the young girl feeling her way in a new community to the rich dowager, assured and commanding. Ann comes to her second blooming in Paris, where she encounters the woman who has run away with Peter's partner. It is an intense experience but it sends her home able to look upon her grown-up children with sufficient detachment and sufficient humor.

Janet A. Fairbank herself comes from a pioneer Chicago family. She was born in Chicago, the daughter of Benjamin F. Ayer and Janet Hopkins Ayer, and was educated at the University of Chicago. She was married to Kellogg Fairbank, a Chicago lawyer, in 1900. They have three children.

She has always been extremely active in society, politics and charitable work. For many years she has been chairman of the managing board of the Chicago Lying-In Hospital and she is now a member of the executive committee of the Democratic National Committee. For a number of years she reviewed plays for the Chicago *Tribune* and she still does special articles. A good deal of her fiction is written at her summer home on Lake Geneva. "The

Smiths" was followed by a collection of her short stories, "Idle Hands" (1927). These range in scene from the Middle West to Madrid, and from New York to Rome and the Riviera. They are, to an extent, portraits of interesting women, and although these women are "typical" none of them fails of individual reality.

Books by Janet A. Fairbank

1910. At Home.
Three Days More. Play.
The Cortlandts of Washington Square. Novel. *Bobbs-Merrill.*
1925. The Smiths. Novel. *Bobbs-Merrill.*
1927. Idle Hands. Short stories. *Bobbs-Merrill.*

MATEEL HOWE FARNHAM

THE prize contest for a novel which discovered the talent of Martha Ostenso is responsible for the discovery, in its second incidence, of Mateel Howe Farnham, whose first novel, "Rebellion" (1927), raises every expectation of good work to come—in addition to its own considerable excellence.

"Rebellion" is the story of Jacqueline Burrell's revolt from the domination of her father, who loves his headstrong, incorrigible daughter and, not understanding her, endeavors to control her. The breach between them widens and the crisis is reached when Jacqueline, a woman now, finds that her love for the man of her choice is to be thwarted. Open warfare follows.

What particularly gives substance to the book is its sense of being, not the story of a particular case or a particular era, but the epitome of parents and children. The inevitable rebellion of a generation from the generation which preceded it is what is really dramatized by Mrs. Farnham. Resistance to restraints, the longing for new scenes, the unconscious cruelty of the young, the bewildered and often angry incomprehension of age—these are the real ingredients of the story. Mrs. Farnham tells it affectingly and with poignance; yet she is never sentimental.

She comes to the beginning of a career with a certain right, for she is herself the daughter of E. W. Howe, author of "The Story of a Country Town," an editor and publicist whose reputation long since spread out from Atchison, Kansas, in ripples that go pretty much around the world. When Mrs. Farnham won the $10,000 award

and her novel was to appear serially in *Pictorial Review*, Ed Howe wrote an article for the magazine, "My Only Daughter," which might well go into a collection of modern essays for its beauty, humor, restraint and wisdom. There is space only for a few excerpts here:

Mrs. Farnham was one of the dearest of the millions of girl children who have blessed the world. When she was twelve I loved her so much that frequently I took her on long trips that I might have her all to myself. . . . One old fellow said:

"Sir, I congratulate you on the most adorable little daughter I have seen in years. I don't want to be disagreeable, but let me tell you what happened to mine: she married, and I hardly know her now."

I have disliked that man a long time, but lately am able to understand him better.

Then my daughter went away to school. We had friends in Washington who gave her "advantages." . . . It was near this time that I found something in one of her letters that was "managing" rather than loving and trusting, as I had been accustomed to. The title of her novel is "Rebellion," and I shudder when I realize what it means. All women go on the war-path around fourteen, and fight the men until they die. I long for an armistice, but do not expect one. . . .

Since she reached maturity, I declare I have never known a woman able to make more delicious fun of the men. I enjoyed her brilliance for a time, until it occurred to me: "She is making fun of me, too." . . .

I have not read "Rebellion." I do not know what it is about, but am willing to wager it does not contain the admiration for at least one man she displayed at twelve. No doubt its comments on my sex will be just and accurate. We men were very harsh with women in the old days, and I rejoice they have achieved victory over us; but somehow I long for the trust, the love, this bright woman had for me when she was twelve. She's forgotten

her attitude toward me in that day, but I have not, and never will. I did not deserve it, but it was the most agreeable thing in my life.

If "Rebellion" criticizes me I shall not object. I think I suggested the title. I said once, in talking about her writing:

"Your greatest cleverness is in making fun of the men. Try that. You know me well, and I am vulnerable. Pick at me."

Her answer almost broke my heart, for she said: "I had thought of that, and am trying it." . . .

I invented her name. I once heard a Frenchwoman pronounce "Mathilde" so charmingly that I made it into "Mateel" in writing "The Story of a Country Town."

Mateel Howe became the wife of Dwight Thompson Farnham in 1910. Mr. Farnham is a consulting industrial engineer established in New York City since 1920 and is himself the author of several books on scientific methods in industry. Mr. and Mrs. Farnham have homes in New York City and Westport, Connecticut.

By Mateel Howe Farnham

1927. Rebellion. *Dodd, Mead.*

EDNA FERBER

She sold her first story to a magazine when she was twenty-three and her first novel was published when she was twenty-four. Literary statistics were all against her; she would probably not last. The more brilliant she was—and she showed plenty of brilliance—the sooner she would burn out. Some said it wasn't brilliance but only cleverness, and a trick at that. Some said she imitated O. Henry, and justification for such an opinion can be found in her earliest stories.

She wrote a lot of stories about a business woman, traveling saleswoman rather. She didn't follow up her first novel—"Dawn O'Hara, the Girl Who Laughed"; the title sounded cheap and the story was crude—but merely bunched up her short stories and published them in book form. Even if they did have the same principal character they weren't a "book."

Her short stories began to get better. It was admitted that she "had something." It seemed, for the most part, to consist in an ability to take off American types to the life. Her traveling saleswoman was somehow real even when you doubted if such a specimen ever existed. But her shopgirls, waiters, manicurists, fresh guys, and all the rest of them!

A story about a lonely man appeared, "The Gay Old Dog," and people went around saying that this was one of the *great* short stories. After ten or eleven years they have not revised this verdict.

Those who had thought she was a flash in the pan contended that she was incapable of a sustained piece of work, either overlooking the fact that she had just done

a second novel or, most likely, unaware of the book's existence.

Then came "The Girls."

The next year there was a book of short stories containing "Home Girl" and "The Afternoon of a Faun" and "Old Man Minick."

The next year there was nothing.

The next year, "So Big."

Another year's interval.

"Show Boat" (1926).

"Mother Knows Best" (1927), more short stories, including "Classified."

Not a peep out of the doubters.

II

Yet they were wrong to be silent. There is nothing finer in criticism than a handsome acknowledgment when you have been proved to be mistaken. The time for that acknowledgment was when "The Girls" appeared. The acknowledgment made, these voices should have been exercised again, sympathetically but critically, when "So Big" was published. Still sympathetically, but even more critically, should they have been raised over "Show Boat." Well, as a matter of fact, several were.

By the hardest kind of hard work, Edna Ferber has gone a great distance in a comparatively short time. She is not only young for such an accomplishment but is among the youngest American women writers in the first rank. Her best work almost certainly lies ahead; for now the literary statistics turn in her favor. They are singularly like insurance data; and if you get past a certain point there is no reason why you should not attain a hundred—years or per cent.

But how good her best will be depends to some uncertain extent upon the friendly but honest appraisal of

what she does now, including a perception of what she tried to do but carefully excluding opinions as to what she ought to do next.

III

Edna Ferber was born in Kalamazoo, Michigan, in 1887, the daughter of Jacob Charles Ferber and Julia Neuman Ferber. The family moved to Appleton, Wisconsin, and Edna went from the Appleton High School at seventeen years to work as a reporter on the Appleton *Daily Crescent*. Afterward she got a job on the Milwaukee *Journal* and then on the Chicago *Tribune*. She began to try writing magazine stories and sold one, "The Homely Heroine," to *Everybody's*. Then she set to work on a novel, but when it was finished she didn't like it, and threw it in the waste-basket. Her mother retrieved the book and sent it to a publisher. This was "Dawn O'Hara."

Certainly, a beginner's novel. Yet such a passage as this, dealing with people not important to the story, showed the nature of Miss Ferber's gift:

The Whalens live just around the corner. The Whalens are omniscient. They have a system of news-gathering which would make the efforts of a New York daily appear antiquated. They know that Jenny Laffin feeds the family on soup meat and oatmeal when Mr. Laffin is on the road; they know that Mrs. Pearson only shakes out her rugs once in four weeks; they can tell you the number of times a week that Sam Dempster comes home drunk; they know that the Merkles never have cream with their coffee because little Lizzie Merkle goes to the creamery every day with just one pail and three cents; they gloat over the knowledge that Professor Grimes, who is a married man, is sweet on Gertie Ashe, who teaches second reader in his school; they can tell you where Mrs. Black got her seal coat, and her husband

only earning two thousand a year; they know who is going to run for mayor, and how long poor Angela Sims has to live, and what Guy Donnelly said to Min when he asked her to marry him.

The three Whalens—mother and daughters—hunt in a group. They send meaning glances to one another across the room, and at parties they get together and exchange bulletins in a corner. On passing the Whalen house one is uncomfortably aware of shadowy forms lurking in the windows, and of parlor curtains that are agitated for no apparent cause.

How differently Miss Ferber would write that to-day. Probably she would stage a little scene among the Whalens. She wouldn't say omniscient. But even then she could extract essence of Whalen.

After "Dawn O'Hara" she continued to do short stories. From a professional writer's standpoint, the ability to do marketable short stories is an assurance of bread and butter, and perhaps pound cake. They take less time than a book, are paid for on acceptance, and prices are good. As a rule, a novel takes from six months to a year, earns less than $1,000 for the author, and yields not a cent for a year and a half after work is begun on it. If he can sell the serial rights this gloomy picture brightens—but that is a long chance. Such is the outlook for the new writer; and it continues to be the outlook for a great many experienced writers.

But although she did short stories, Miss Ferber almost immediately created the character of Emma McChesney, the traveling saleswoman. The first Emma McChesney story was published in the *American Magazine* in the same year that "Dawn O'Hara" saw the light of day; and after some other stories (including her first, "The Homely Heroine") had been collected in "Buttered Side Down" (1912) the public was invited to a feast of Emma

in "Roast Beef Medium: The Business Adventures of Emma McChesney" (1913). In 1914-15 there were two more books about the business woman; and Ethel Barrymore enacted Emma all over the country for a couple of years. Occasionally Miss Ferber did a story not in this series.

"Fanny Herself" (1917), her second novel, is much better than her first and is interesting for a certain autobiographical ingredient. It is not an autobiographical novel but it does use some material from Miss Ferber's own life.

Miss Ferber is of Jewish parentage—but in a small town in the interior. Her father, a Hungarian, was the owner of a general merchandise store, first in Iowa, then in Appleton, Wisconsin. Her mother is an American, born in Milwaukee. One has to have lived in a village of 5,000 or under to appreciate the relation of such a family to their neighbors, and the attitude of the town toward the family. Perhaps it may be inaccurately summed up by saying that the Jew stands pretty much on his merits as an individual, at least, after a time. The second generation, having gone to school together, is even more inclined toward this standard of appraisal. And in school the Jewish boy will "go with" a Christian girl; the Jewish girl will be the object of attention by Christian boys. Now this, as Edna Ferber saw it and lived in it, comes into "Fanny Herself"—a phase of American life that has scarcely been depicted elsewhere, although Irvin S. Cobb touches it casually through the character of Herman Felsburg in some of his Judge Priest stories. But even that is not a parallel, for Herman Felsburg is a Civil War veteran.

This was the year of "The Gay Old Dog," which was included in the collection of non-Emma McChesney stories published in 1918 under the title of one, "Cheer-

ful, by Request." Miss Ferber had never been a rapid producer, and from now on five or six stories a year was to be her maximum output. In 1921, the year of "The Girls," apparently only two short stories by her were published in magazines.

"Half Portions" (1920) is notable for two stories, "The Maternal Feminine" and "Old Lady Mandle."

"The Girls," her third novel, is immeasurably ahead of her second novel and is still possibly the best piece of work she has done. An anonymous writer describes the genesis of the book and makes an apt criticism.[1]

" 'The Girls' formed in her active brain as a cameo; but it got away from her, swept her off her feet after she began it, and she found page after page rustling from her machine. Then one day, having shut off her telephone for weeks, she discovered on her desk a full-fledged novel. . . . In depicting the manless household of the Thrift girls, on Chicago's South Side, she has torn down not only one wall but all four, and allowed the whole world not to peep but to see openly those three generations of lonely women. The story mounts with every chapter; and Miss Ferber's clean-cut style, held beautifully in check, exactly suits the material at her hand. She pounds in her effects, makes these 'girls' walk down the streets with you, turn windy corners with you; and she causes the old Chicago to pass in a panorama before your eyes. The scene wherein the soldiers of the Civil War march away from the Lake City is tremendous—a whirlwind of action. And all the threads are finally gathered up. They are not only gathered, they are tied in a deft knot, and one is left with a feeling of complete satisfaction. It is Miss Ferber's triumph that she has accomplished this tour de force. Yet was it artistic to cover so long a period of time in so short a compass? There

[1] Chapter XIII of "The Literary Spotlight" (Doran: 1924).

are moments in 'The Girls' when you feel the nervous desire of the short story writer to whittle to the bone. It might have been a greater book if she had expanded more and compressed with less anxiety."

"Gigolo" (1922) contains "The Afternoon of a Faun," "Old Man Minick" and "Home Girl" as particularly distinguished stories. It was followed by "So Big," a book in the 200,000 class.

IV

Everybody knows the story of "So Big." Dirk de Jong is the son of a Hollander who raises garden truck outside Chicago and who has married Selina, a schoolteacher of Yankee stock. Miss Ferber knows so clearly where she is going that the last scene of the novel can be forecast to the reader in the first chapter, and is; yet the emotion of that last scene is not lessened when you reach it, at the end of the book.

Selina used to ask her child lovingly: "How big is my little boy? How big is my man?" And small Dirk would stretch his arms to their furthest reach. "So-o-o big!" But, Miss Ferber immediately tells you, he was not really as big as that; he was never to be as big as the widespread arms of his mother's love and imagination made him.

She designs him for an architect, some one to make real and tangible the cloudy palaces of her dreams. But to Dirk, architecture is never anything more than blueprints and the extreme difficulty of squeezing in space for toilets in office buildings.

He floats into the bond business and ultimately becomes a fashionably correct young man with a correctly furnished apartment in the correct section of Chicago. He wears the right clothes and is scrupulously ministered to by a Japanese valet. Everything about him is nice, careful and sleek. Yet Miss Ferber makes you feel, and

makes Dirk's behavior confess, that the "middle-aged woman in a calico dress, with wispy hair and bad teeth, grubbing on a little truck farm" is a greater person by far; that her son has neither fought a good fight nor kept the faith.

With the execution of the novel no fault is to find; but every novel not evidently aimed at pure entertainment endeavors to influence our attitude toward some aspect of human life. Miss Ferber says quite plainly what we are to think of Selina and her son, but whether we can go the whole way with her is another question. What does she say?

1. That a mother's loving ambition and a son's achievement are often a thousand miles apart. This we may unqualifiedly agree to. We may do more: we may say that it is a fact that cannot be too often or too greatly stressed in the effort to avert or at least mitigate one of life's more bitter disappointments.

2. That Selina is a much bigger individual than Dirk. Most of us would say yes without hesitation. But people whose minds are cut after the pattern of Dirk's, to whom the best of life is comfort and style, would not.

3. That the Dirks do not fight a good fight or keep the faith. Yes, if you add "in their mother's eyes and in the eyes of those minded like Selina." Otherwise, no. They do the best they can, the Dirks of this world, with what they have. If it is not the parent's fault that they are differently made, with unlike ambitions, it certainly is not theirs, either.

4. That a Dirk will realize he has fallen hopelessly short of an ideal and will be shamefaced about it. Certainly not. Here is the defect in Miss Ferber's psychology and it vitiates her final and very effective scene. Dirk, out of love for his mother and a comprehension that he had somehow disappointed her, might hang his

head a little or feel regret. But that is all he would grasp, and even then resentment would not be far away.

5. That the Selinas of the world are the worthy and admirable persons. Worthy no doubt; not entirely admirable. There is too much of the apron-string for unalloyed admiration. As a matter of fact, mothers like Selina working on children like Dirk, often produce an inferiority complex that ruins the child's life. When mothers realize that a child's ambitions must bear a definite relation to that child's capacities; that children are not mere extensions of themselves but individuals; that no child is brought into the world to gratify parental aspirations, this will be a happier world.

V

"Show Boat" (1926), as curiously few readers seem to realize, has the same fundamental subject—a contrast of ambitions, ideals and accomplishment between two generations. In this story we have a mother and her daughter, both actresses, the one in melodramas on an old Mississippi river craft, the other in modern intellectual plays before smart audiences in present-day New York. The perception of what the novel is all about is, however, hindered by its construction and the disproportion of parts.

The book opens with the birth of the daughter, Kim Ravenal, in a raging storm and flood on the Mississippi River. Magnolia Ravenal, the mother, is herself the daughter of Andy Hawks, owner of the river show boat, or floating theater, *Cotton Blossom,* and his formidable wife, Parthy (Parthenia) Ann.

In the second chapter, at page 25, we go back to the childhood of Magnolia Ravenal and the life of the river show. At page 251 we have reached the birth of Kim, pictured in detail in the first chapter.

The chronology of the story is now straightforward enough. But at page 366, without warning, the story skips an interval of not less than fifteen years, and probably more. We had left Magnolia, deserted by her husband and getting a job in vaudeville; Kim a girl in a convent. We turn the page to find Kim a star on Broadway and the wife of Kenneth Cameron, a gifted young producer of plays "of the more precious pattern."

It must be realized that, in a sense, the whole book is written for the sake of the last thirty pages (page 366 to page 398, the end). No doubt the life of the show boat fascinated Miss Ferber by its picturesqueness, just as it entertains the reader. But what she is getting at in "Show Boat," as in "So Big," is the enormous difference between two generations; and the fact that both mother and daughter are in the same profession only emphasizes the gulf. Miss Ferber means to say quite unmistakably that the mother is the bigger woman, and part of her method of saying it is by keen satire of the modern actress:

Kim was intelligent, successful, workmanlike, intuitive, vigorous, adaptable. She was almost the first of this new crop of intelligent, successful, deft, workmanlike, intuitive, vigorous, adaptable young women of the theater. There was about her—or them—nothing of genius, of greatness, of the divine fire. . . . It became the thing to proclaim each smart young woman the Duse of her day if she had a decent feeling for stage tempo, could sustain a character through three acts, speak the English language intelligibly, cross a stage or sit in a chair naturally.

The new-school actresses went in for the smarter teas, eschewed cocktails, visited the art exhibits, had their portraits painted in the new manner, never were seen at night clubs, were glimpsed coming out of Scribner's with

a thick volume of modern biography, used practically no make-up when in mufti, kept their names out of the New York telephone directory, wore flat-heeled shoes and woolen stockings while walking briskly in Central Park, went to Symphony Concerts. . . . Everything they did on the stage was right. Intelligent, well thought out, and right. . . . Your pulses, as you sat in the theater, were normal.

In spite of Kim's success, in spite of the uttermost perfection she has attained to in her work, her marriage, her life, she is simply another Dirk de Jong. But here Miss Ferber escapes the warped sentimentality of "So Big." Kim's stature is not measured by a mother's wholly unjustifiable ambition but by that mother's actual accomplishment. There is frank recognition that a good deal of the differences in mother and daughter may be due to molding circumstances. For Kim, life has never offered a moment of hardship, terror or despair. Intelligence and persistence and cleverness; but courage has never been called on. There is no attempt to represent Kim as sorrowing because she is not other than she is. Insofar as Miss Ferber says that the daughter has missed something magnificent in life that her mother knew, few will be found to dissent.

Thus, in that most vital matter of all, the attempt of a novel to form our judgments and influence our attitude, "Show Boat" is a far better and sounder piece of work than "So Big." That most readers should not have recognized this is an unhappy fact due, no doubt, to the awkward construction of the story. Miss Ferber had shown, both in "The Girls" and "So Big," that she could construct a novel. Her trouble with this one was as great as Willa Cather's with "The Professor's House"; and in both cases the result represents the best the author was able to manage.

She opened "Show Boat" with Kim's birth for two reasons. For one, it afforded a dramatic scene; but her more important reason was that it appeared to be the only way of joining together the two halves of her tale, Magnolia's and Kim's. But then follow 342 pages of Magnolia, thirty-two of Kim. And even these thirty-two pages are largely Magnolia's. We must realize that this is Magnolia's novel, after all, and that the daughter exists only for the mother's sake. Probably the first chapter is misplaced, the abrupt jump of years at page 366 an error, and the interval of the jump too long.

"Mother Knows Best" (1927), a new collection of stories, is distinguished by the title story and by the inclusion of "Classified."

VI

Miss Ferber writes about herself with facetiousness and those who see her at play in the social life of New York are likely to get an impression of frivolousness highly misleading. She cares for nothing but good work, honest work, and hard work. When, in the closing pages of "Show Boat," she used real names of New Yorkers and satirized the Algonquin circle [2] she was satirizing the very crowd she plays with, and so, by clear implication, herself in hours of ease. She is keenly aware of the dangers that beset a successful writer, and as she has exceptional will-power, will probably avoid them all. If she does, and if she continues to grow at the same rate, a secure place waits for her in the literature of her country.

[2] In recent years the interior dining room of the Hotel Algonquin has been a favorite assembling place for a group of writers, publishers, critics, actors and actresses, with a round table, referred to in "Show Boat," as the focus. All the arts are represented by minorities, but the group as a whole is probably the most representative one of the "young intellectuals"—most of them no longer young.

Books by Edna Ferber

*** Of first importance
** Of next importance
* Third in importance

1911. Dawn O'Hara, the Girl Who Laughed. Novel. *Stokes.*
1912. Buttered Side Down. Short stories. *Stokes.*
1913. * Roast Beef Medium: The Business Adventures of Emma McChesney. Integrated short stories. *Stokes.*
1914. Personality Plus: Some Experiences of Emma McChesney and Her Son Jock. Integrated short stories. *Stokes.*
1915. Emma McChesney & Co. Integrated short stories. *Stokes.*
1917. Fanny Herself. Novel. *Stokes.*
1918. ** Cheerful, by Request. Short stories. *Doubleday.*
1920. * Half Portions. Short stories. *Doubleday.*
1920. $1,200 a Year (with Newman Levy). Three-act comedy. *Doubleday.*
1921. *** The Girls. Novel. *Doubleday.*
1922. ** Gigolo. Short stories. *Doubleday.*
1924. *** So Big. Novel. *Doubleday.*
1926. *** Show Boat. Novel. *Doubleday.*
1927. ** Mother Knows Best. Short stories. *Doubleday.*

Sources on Edna Ferber

"Edna Ferber, a Biographical Sketch with a Bibliography," by Rogers Dickinson. Doubleday, Page & Company: 1925. Includes large excerpts from Miss Ferber's several autobiographical articles, which are therefore not separately noted.

"The Literary Spotlight," by anonymous authors. Doran: 1924. Chapter XIII: Edna Ferber.

ESTHER FORBES

THIS chapter introduces—where "O Genteel Lady!" has not already introduced her—a new author whose first novel alone stands to her credit. But everything about Esther Forbes is indicative, to the experienced eye, of a novelist with her foot firmly planted on the bottom step of a worthy career.

It is her distinction to have written a novel of Boston in the 1850's and to have made her characters seem sturdily real. There is no scent of lavender about her heroine who, except for her surroundings, might be a restless, ambitious, self-realizing girl of to-day. In spite of stays and bustles, hoopskirts and crinoline, Lanice Bardeen leaves her native village with the most modern of gestures. In Boston she finds work with a publisher and meets, among other celebrities, Captain Anthony Jones, an English adventurer. The lady, in spite of a boasted gentility, loves this young rake with an all but fatal passion. When he goes back to England we discover her crossing over shortly after. She meets Tennyson, George Eliot, the Brownings, and plunges, herself, into literature. But the true stuff of the novel are her emotional struggles as she seeks in love, in literary creation, and in maternity an outlet for the rebellious and hungry life within her.

It is, as Henry Seidel Canby observes, very much more than a period study. "It is a most humorous and most poignant story of a young girl in whom hot blood and an active mind combat the embattled powers of the most genteel period in history. Even without its charming

background of tilting hoopskirts, sleigh rides to Cambridge, woman's rights meetings, sentimental magazines, Boston talk and Salem houses, it would be a tale of the scorch of passion and the healing of good sense that would be good reading in any setting."

Esther Forbes was born in Worcester, Massachusetts, the daughter of William Trowbridge Forbes and Harriette Merrifield Forbes. Her father was for many years a judge in the Massachusetts courts. She chose to go West to college, to the University of Wisconsin. In 1921 she entered the editorial department of a Boston publishing house where she was the means of bringing Rafael Sabatini into American fame, the manuscript of "Scaramouche" passing through her hands. For five years she was an exceptionally good reviewer and publicist for other authors. In January, 1926, she was married to Albert L. Hoskins, Jr., of Philadelphia; in March she was still reading manuscripts; in April her novel had already attracted attention, and by July it was a best-seller. A little vacation in Europe seemed permissible.

"I first became interested in the days of stays and gentility," Miss Forbes explains, "through Godey Books.[1] I was exposed to them very early, before I thought of reading the text. Those long-ago, lovely mawkish ladies in hoops and ringlets, fastidiously ruffled and delicately waisted, their sad innocent foreheads, their little foolish locked mouths, their bending necks and sloping shoulders, proved perennially fascinating to me. And then I grew older and read the stories, which are certainly the worst ever written. I did not read many—no child could. Temporarily I forgot these timid ballroom ladies and their hirsute gentlemen.

"Later the stories began to prove almost as fascinating to me as the pictures had at an earlier date. I think it is

[1] *Godey's Lady's Book,* an American magazine of the 1840's-1870's.

the contrast between morbid delicacy and pompous vulgarity that makes them so amusing. For instance, I remember one story published some time in the 1850's. The scene is a magnificent ('stupendous' would be the word) New Year's Ball in a fashionable New York house. The blasé beaux are gathered in the sparkling dining-room coolly criticizing everything their hostess has done for their amusement. Even the champagne they find flat, so these elegant coxcombs turn all their glasses into a conveniently placed 'cuspidor.' Imagine a cuspidor present at such an exquisite party—yet one is led to believe it was no little trifle. Not one of those tortoises that only open up when its tail is stepped on, which did their bit to give charm to certain Victorian parlors, but a yawning brazen colossus into which quarts of flat champagne could be poured by scores of delicately bewhiskered languid young fops.

"This particular scene is not incorporated in 'O Genteel Lady!' but such and similar ones were in the back of my mind while putting Lanice through her paces. What I was even more anxious to get than the flimsy delicacy of the period built upon a sturdy foundation of human vulgarity, was the contrast between the body and the clothes, layers and layers, yards and yards of them, exquisite, formidable, and very tight. I speak of Lanice's hoops which hold the world away from her at arm's length, and more than once mention the subtle and very alive warm body which makes the kernel for this great nosegay of skirts and petticoats, pelisses, dolmans, and fluttering ribbons. In two or three scenes (page 73, for instance) I go one step further and talk a little sadly of the grim, cruel skeleton inside the quick and hidden body. So you see my idea of Lanice is three layers of personality —clothes on the outside, then body, and within even that what Housman calls 'the man of bone.' But this is hardly

true, either, for it is the heart more than anything else that counts.

"I first planned to have three parts—like a demonstration novel. The first was to show Lanice, my delicate lady of a genteel age, swallowed up in the passion of an unsatisfactory affair with the wicked Captain Jones. The second was to show her using almost exactly the same integral elements in her nature in literary creation, and in the third she was to find in child-bearing an equally good outlet for her restless, insurgent love of life. That's the way the story looked in notes some three years ago. But look at it now! What I was trying to do, however, will partly explain why I had Lanice marry Professor Ripley. If she liked him as well and in the same way as the Jones scoundrel, you'd see her fulfilling herself through love, not children, and it was the latter I wanted."

As this chapter is written, Miss Forbes is at work on a second novel to be called "A Mirror for Witches." It is a dark tale—a tragic story of Salem witchcraft, the suggestion of a story of this sort occurring in "O Genteel Lady!" For this novel Miss Forbes may be expected to employ the not too archaic style of Daniel Defoe; and a good deal of her material will be drawn from Samuel Sewall's Diary.

All this is forecast, but a novelist's weather is as changeable as that outdoors. The important thing is that this writer has plans for a half-dozen novels; that she is a slow, careful worker; and that she has begun excellently well.

Books by Esther Forbes

1926. O Genteel Lady! *Houghton Mifflin.*
1928. A Mirror for Witches. *Houghton Mifflin.*

ZONA GALE

PERHAPS Emerson was right. "The highest cannot be spoken." But if the highest cannot, the strangest can, the most beautiful, the unearthly. Mary Johnston, Fannie Hurst and Zona Gale, in divergent ways, have been busy in recent years with the recital. Miss Johnston is possibly too far from the images of physical sensation, as Miss Hurst is sometimes too immersed in them. But Miss Gale moves in a sentence, in a single phrase, from the flesh to the spirit. No living American writer is capable of more acute observation more indelibly and concisely expressed. We shall see it in contemplation of "Miss Lulu Bett." None, except she, could build to a climax in which her hero goes insane, and remains interestingly insane, for the last hundred pages of the book. But there it is, before us, in "Preface to a Life."

She has had a heart-breaking experience as a writer, and it has made her a "great" writer. One can find extensive fault with all her best and later work; and depending upon the powers of articulation the cavil will vary from a detailed exposition of technical failures to a mere head-shaking, sufficiently ominous. But wher all the fault is found, the work remains. When all the distaste is indicated, the excited interest is without diminution. "Birth" (1918) and "Miss Lulu Bett" (1920) and "Preface to a Life" (1926) have the stamp of genius. Years will pass and the expert will examine them with respect, writing down in his notebook of specimens the comment: "Authentic, source unknown."

II

Zona Gale must be classed with the literary spinsters of New England, with Emily Dickinson, Amy Lowell, Sarah Orne Jewett and the rest of them. A different experience of life and a mid-Western environment have made slight, accidental differences in her material. She was born in Portage, Wisconsin, in 1874, the daughter of Charles Franklin Gale, of Ohio, and Eliza Beers Gale, of New York State. She is the eighth generation from Richard Gael (as he spelled it) who came to Watertown, Massachusetts, in 1640. There is also Scotch-Irish descent through the women of the Gale family. On her mother's side, Miss Gale is only the third generation in America and the ancestry is mostly English—Beers, Brown, Billinghurst, Taylor.

One great-great-grandfather, Edward Beers, was a writer on Universalism; another, a Billinghurst, a Baptist preacher, came to America because of his republican ideas; and a third, Captain Henry Gale, was in Shay's Rebellion in Massachusetts and marched on the Supreme Court at Worcester demanding the repeal of the law imprisoning for debt. For this he got sentence of death as a treasonable fellow, but was reprieved.

Miss Gale was graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 1895 but stayed for a Master's degree in 1899. Two years on Milwaukee newspapers. Three years in New York, on the staff of the New York *World* and trying to write for magazines. "From 1895 wrote and submitted stories steadily in leisure time with no acceptance until 1904." In 1904 she went home to Portage to live with her parents. She has lived there ever since, with excursions to New York and California and to lecture.

"I had some years of that passion for reform." She tore around in civic work; then wisely resigned from

nearly everything and put her back into her writing. But in all her economic, social, political and religious attitudes she carries out, with intelligence and sympathy, the fearless and liberal traditions of her family inheritance.

III

Carl Van Doren has described the general atmosphere of Miss Gale's early work:

"She was the inventor of Friendship Village, one of the sweetest of all the villages from Miss Mitford and Mrs. Gaskell down. Friendship lay ostensibly in the Middle West, but it actually stood . . . upon the confectionery shelf of the fiction shop, preserved in a thick syrup and set up where a tender light could strike across it at all hours. In story after story Miss Gale varied the same device: that of showing how childlike children are, how sisterly are sisters, how brotherly are brothers, how motherly are mothers, how fatherly are fathers, how grandmotherly and grandfatherly are grandmothers and grandfathers, and how lovely are all true lovers of whatever age, sex, color, or condition."

Writing in 1919, Miss Gale observed:

"The first editor to whom these stories were submitted declined them with the word that his acquaintance with small towns was wide but that he had never seen any such people as these. About sixty of these stories have been published in magazines, the majority of them now collected in four volumes, but I am still not sure that the first editor was not right."

With the exception of a fantastic book, her very first, she wrote nothing of novel-length until "Birth."

This really long novel, appearing in 1918, attracted little attention and most of that was unintelligent and unsympathetic. One reviewer asked pathetically what had become of the Zona Gale of Friendship Village. One

pictures him as still asking. The book not only attracted small attention, it sold almost nothing. Some time afterward it was to be published in England, arouse strong praise, and sell well. A long time afterward—after the furore over "Miss Lulu Bett" (1920)—it would find its public in America, begin to sell, continue selling to-day, ten years beyond first publication. But how slow the process was may be realized from one fact: Mr. Van Doren, whose "Contemporary American Novelists" (1922) we have just quoted, writing after the publication of "Miss Lulu Bett," and in its praise, does not even mention "Birth"—was then apparently unaware of its existence, or of its quality.

Except for some scenes in Chicago, "Birth" is laid in a tiny Wisconsin town. The "hero," Marshall Pitt, is a traveling salesman handling pickle and fruit products; insignificant; with long, thin, freckled wrists and a coat that gave the effect of blowing when no wind was about. You sicken over the little man's humiliations in such social life as Burage, Wisconsin, affords. He marries a girl of Burage, a quite ordinary girl, with some social gifts and very feminine ambitions. Although he knows nothing of the work, Pitt buys out a business in the town and becomes a paperhanger. His wife, Barbara, drops abruptly out of the picture and the novel develops as a narrative of the life-relation of Marshall Pitt and his son. Here is a story more commonplace than the "Main Street" which Sinclair Lewis was to publish so sensationally two years later. And here is a sample of what Zona Gale did with such utter commonplaceness:

It was in this manner that their child was born. There he was, sentient. A rift in experience, the crossing of the street by Barbara at one moment rather than the next; the opening of a gate by Pitt in the afternoon in-

stead of the morning. Then joy, ill, the depths, madness, flowing about the two. These passed but there remained the child—living, exquisite, sturdy, sensitive, a new microcosm, experiencing within himself the act of God.

Such passages were not infrequent, with their vibration of great music and their austere loveliness of the human spirit. They were embedded in a running discourse which could achieve, with equal effect, its poignant and blackened moments, but which for the most part was homely, direct and humorous, with a humor, "often sharp and never overkind. . . . But here is the real substance of things more to be desired than the fine gold of sunshine. Miss Gale is incurably funny and we love her for it—witness the delivery horse, 'hanging out its tongue, not at all because of fast driving but from preference,' and Mis' Henry Bates, whose stomach wouldn't allow her to drink coffee. 'She always spoke as if her stomach stood back of her chair.' . . . 'Birth' achieves the rare result of being both mystical and colloquial." [1]

IV

There seems to be no justification for the persistence with which "Miss Lulu Bett" (1920) is spoken of as a novel. It is a novelette. It is a really great novelette; that is, its length makes no more difference in its rank than in the cases of Edith Wharton's "Ethan Frome" or Willa Cather's "A Lost Lady." All three of these are admitted masterpieces—having said which, one has said all.

Mr. Van Doren again:

"Though the action of 'Miss Lulu Bett' takes place in a different village, called Warbleton, it might as well have been in Friendship—in Friendship seen during a mood

[1] Constance Murray Greene in the Books and the Book World section of *The Sun*, New York, November 24, 1918.

when its creator had grown weary of the eternal saccharine. Now and then, she realized, some spirit even in Friendship must come to hate all those idyllic posturings; now and then in some narrow bosom there must flash up the fires of youth and revolution. It is so with Lulu Bett, dim drudge in the house of her silly sister and of her sister's pompous husband: a breath of life catches at her and she follows it on a pitiful adventure which is all she has enough vitality to achieve but which is nevertheless real and vivid in a waste of dullness. . . . Miss Gale's story is as spare as the virgin frame of Lulu Bett. . . . She riddles the tedious affectations of the Deacon household almost without a word of comment. . . . The daughter, she says, 'was as primitive as pollen'—and biology rushes in to explain Di's blind philanderings. 'In the conversations of Dwight and Ina,' it is said of the husband and wife, 'you saw the historical home forming in clots in the fluid wash of the community'—and anthropology holds the candle." [2]

There is a debate about the literary method exemplified in "Miss Lulu Bett," and we might as well make the record of it here. In truth, it is all one-sided, by way of acclaiming Miss Gale's technique. In an interesting essay rather more devoted to novelists' methods than to Miss Gale's work, Wilson Follett says:

"A finished character such as Lulu Bett represents an almost prohibitive cost to the novelist—a cost paid in terms of work which can never show. . . . Miss Gale evokes Lulu out of a fund of knowledge about her exactly such as Arnold Bennett assembles about Constance and Sophia Baines in 'The Old Wives' Tale.' Then Miss Gale *uses* the knowledge—which is a very different affair from merely assembling it in the presence of the reader.

[2] "Contemporary American Novelists," by Carl Van Doren. (Macmillan: 1922.)

The fact is, our biographic novelists have become too lazy. . . . They perform faithfully enough the preliminary studies. . . : They offer these preliminary studies as finished novels." [3]

Elsewhere in the same essay he indicates that "Birth" has many irrelevances; that "Miss Lulu Bett" "represents instant attainment, without ostensible preparation or transition, of unqualified mastery" in a new medium. "Faint Perfume" (1925), also very short, was "corroboration and promise." The advent of another fully biographic novel in "Preface to a Life" (1926) might be thought somewhat to damage the ingenious structure of this argument, but Mr. Follett bravely proclaims it "the two extremes of Miss Gale's development brought together . . . the method of impressionism applied to the entire area of biography."

A great deal of what Mr. Follett says is as sound as it is interesting. But he tries to prove too much. Whether "Birth" was not selective enough, and whether it had or had not irrelevances, is a matter of opinion, and Mr. Follett's opinion is not one with any overwhelming concurrence. Moreover Miss Gale used no method in "Miss Lulu Bett" which she had not already used in "Birth." The method of "impressionism" is that of both books—as any one might infer from the passage quoted above from "Birth." The difference is the simple one that "Miss Lulu Bett" got critical and public attention and "Birth" did not. It is, of course, to some extent the difference between the state of the public mind in 1918 and 1920. Fine books have perished before this because brought out at an infelicitous time. But there is another and equally prosaic explanation of the difference. Miss Gale had changed publishers, which is sometimes the

[3] "Zona Gale: An Artist in Fiction," by Wilson Follett. Circular published 1926 by D. Appleton & Company.

author's only way of changing his public. A hard and continued effort in advertising and promotion went behind "Miss Lulu Bett," which, thus pushed, succeeded rather slowly, but succeeded at last with a thumping success.

When, not so long after the reverberations were strengthening, the time came to make a play of "Miss Lulu Bett," that didn't hurt the sale of the book, either. It never does; and when the play succeeds, as this one did, it helps. "Birth" has no play in it, but of course it was dramatized, just the same, under the title, "Mister Pitt."

The general discussion as to the biographic novel has no place in this chapter. No doubt our biographical novelists have grown often lazy. But our etchy novelists often show a weak line. Miss Gale herself was to do precisely that in her next "novel" after "Miss Lulu Bett"—"Faint Perfume," one review of which was headed not inaptly, "Too Faint, Perhaps." Both the full-length portrait and the shrewdly condensed situation have their place in the realm of the novel. Each method has its drawbacks and its compensations; each will be kept; and it may be suspected that Mr. Follett would be the first to lament the extinction of either in the interest of any theoretical "development of the novel."

V

In "Faint Perfume" (1923) it was the Crumb family instead of the Deacons and the heroine is a person "of immeasurably finer nervous organization" than Miss Bett. The difficulty was that the Crumbs, coming on top of the Deacons, had a little too much the effect of caricature. Readers rather pardonably felt that Miss Gale had it in for the American family circle and domestic symphony. The other difficulty was in Leda Perrin, the cousin driven into their home by circumstance. A fine

nervous organization is all right, but here there seemed, in most aspects of Leda's receptivity, to be Wordsworth's ideal inverted

> A creature . . . too bright and good
> For human nature's daily food.

Where was the girl's natural vitality, assuming that she had no trace of robustness? And her love affair! It was all too remote, too ethereal, too precious. Sympathy involuntarily went out, not to the Crumbs but toward the Crumbs' firm grasp on life. One wished that Leda could be the least bit Crumby.

An interval of three years is followed by "Preface to a Life" (1926), less popular than "Miss Lulu Bett," or the renascent "Birth," better than either; by far the boldest and most extraordinary thing Miss Gale has done. It is the life of Bernard Mead, of Pauquette, Wisconsin, from about the age of twenty-seven until he is fifty-two. There are three sections. In the first, the year 1900, Bernard meets Alla Locksley, the girl he should have married. The young man has been working for a Chicago firm and is anxious to get out in the world. His father wishes him to take over the Mead lumber business; and both father and mother have their hearts set on his marriage with Laura Hawes, of Pauquette. His youth betrays Bernard into an engagement with Laura; in an argument about the lumber business the father suffers a stroke; and the son, between stricken remorse and a sense of honor toward Laura, ties himself to Pauquette and lumber for the rest of his life.

We jump to 1911. There is a sufficient view of Bernard nearing forty, smothered in his family, still in fleeting touch with Alla. Another break. It is 1925. The ten-year-old son is grown and has proven a worthless stick for the business. Laura, very middle-aged, is behaving a

little foolishly about a singer. Bernard is swallowed up in women—his wife, his mother, two aunts, two daughters. And not too suddenly something happens to him. He acquires, as it seems to him, a kind of second sight, a piercing look into the nature of things. The grain in a piece of wood runs up in little flames; the most inert substances are seen to have a curious living activity; human pretenses are transparent and human emotions nakedly visible. Bernard can feel the timbers, thresholds, casings, sheathing of a dwelling exert themselves in a flowing-together, in being a house. In this awful clarity of the mind acted upon by the extension of all his senses he cries out repeatedly and the gist of his cry is: Why does mankind simply go on loving and begetting; why doesn't it learn to build; why doesn't it extend its perceptions and not just merely glut its present powers of sensation; why, instead of crawling about the earth, doesn't it reach out to the sky?

Bernard is insane.

The excellent alienist announces the verdict and Bernard, overhearing, is not vastly astonished. He goes once more to see Alla, and the scene between them is one of the most interesting treatments in recent fiction. She, too, of course, finds him insane. He returns home. The final paragraph:

He looked at his six women, heard his mother's faint, impatient summons. He asked: "Is the jelly ready?" and imagined them all passing jelly. They laughed amiably, all of them past beauty. He glanced at a mirror, saw his own thickness of flesh and thinness of hair. "The morn of life is past," came to him from somewhere. He braced himself, looking about on them. After all, he was only fifty-two, there would be eight years before he was sixty, and there would be time . . . time enough to find out everything.

Miss Gale is able to make Bernard's insanity extremely articulate and lucid—is, as it were, able to make his insanity convincingly sane—by her method. It is the same method practiced in "Birth" and "Miss Lulu Bett" —a constant pounce on the word or phrase of complete expressiveness, acute observation, rigidly realistic detail, avoidance of any comment, excision of anything that might suggest the sentimental view. Almost all of these technical expertnesses can be illustrated by one short excerpt.

In the passage Mead met his mother. She was moving slowly, because of the waxed floor, but she was alert and slender, and her eighty years were not so much lived down as disregarded. She looked sidewise from her glasses, then over their tops, and then focused squarely upon her son.

"When's Helen coming?" she demanded, sharply.

"In a day or two, now," he told her. "Wednesday, her mother thinks."

"I want her," said Mrs. Mead. "After she's been here for a day or two, she'll be busy like the rest of you. But for a while I'll have somebody to talk to."

"What do you want to say, mother?" said Mead.

She looked up at him, squinting in that shaft of sun. "I want to talk about when I was a girl," she said pertly and turned to the stairs where she appeared to bunch herself, like a cat about to spring, and began climbing slowly, the precise concentrated effort of every muscle all but manifest. He looked at the curve of her back, at her shallow shoulders, intent face, toiling legs. With an intolerable pang of pity he said: "Mother!" But when she asked him what he had said, leaning from the stair rail, eyebrows lifted, he may have found his impulse too much and he changed to, "All right, mother"; and saw her face reveal that she was disappointed, because of what she thought that he would say.

What is the effect of this singular novel? It suggests many things, but three are paramount. The first, expressed in the title, is the conviction that we spend all our lives getting ready for what should really be our life. The second is that some insane people may possibly attain to a lucidity of comprehension beyond the rest of us —that they are, as we say, "unbalanced," but by no means stricken, unless with our denseness. The third is in Bernard Mead's despairing cry, "Why don't they *build?*" He makes it more explicit: Such building as he means is a matter of relationships among people. These, for the general comfort of an unenlightened society, are few and fixed; and it is obvious that neither Bernard nor Miss Gale is talking about free love. Relationships of character, of emotion, of idealism, of thought, of mutually constructive purposes are sought. The stamp of sex and money on nearly all existing relationships is expressly resented. Not "free love" but free contacts, franker ends, are what must come about if the very stuff of living is not to be utterly wasted. The old constraints must be eased; some day it may be possible to abolish them. But let them be eased—the "duty" of the child to the parents, the filial mortgage on which sons and daughters must pay annual interest all their lives; the suffocations of the ritual marriage and the prohibitions on all friendships that cannot be sexually accounted for. Let men and women move easily toward and away from each other, commingle minds, associate in selfless endeavor, draw apart and recombine. There has been no vision like it since Walt Whitman; and if it be objected that it requires a revision of human nature, the answer is that human nature will never be altered by postponements of the introduction of change.

VI

Miss Gale has followed "Preface to a Life" by a slender book of nineteen stories or sketches. "Yellow Gentians and Blue" (1927) is so called because the yellow gentian has a bitter taste and the blue gentian may be conceived of as flowering "from some inner plane of being."

"In the briefest of these stories Miss Gale might be said to illustrate a lifetime by an incident. Sometimes the incident is the only real moment in the whole of that lifetime, sometimes it is typical of all the moments." Naturally the nineteen are uneven; but in the best—not few—Miss Gale does with prose what Emily Dickinson did with poetry. By a word or a line she unlocks the imagination. And she does with life what Flaubert told de Maupassant to do with the tree. "Look at it until you see what no one else sees." Miss Gale has looked like that. There is no artifice apparent and the finger can rest on scarcely an emotional word in any of these infolded dramas. Because they avoid a direct appeal to the emotions, their power over our feelings is incommensurable.

Years will pass, and perhaps she will do bigger things, but it will be apparent that of her work to the beginning of 1928 nothing is so great as "Preface to a Life." Quite aside from its reach beyond the horizon, who else among living writers could make us think, in one sentence, of the genius of Jane Austen; in the next, of the genius of William Blake?

Books by Zona Gale

*** Of first importance
** Of next importance
* Third in importance

1906. Romance Island. *Bobbs-Merrill.*
1907. The Loves of Pelleas and Ettarre. *Bobbs-Merrill.*
1908. Friendship Village. *Macmillan.*
1909. Friendship Village Love Stories. *Macmillan.*
1911. Mothers to Men. *Macmillan.*
1912. Christmas. *Macmillan.*
1913. When I Was a Little Girl. *Macmillan.*
1914. Neighborhood Stories. *Macmillan.*
1915. Heart's Kindred. *Macmillan.*
1917. A Daughter of Tomorrow. *Macmillan.*
1918. *** Birth. *Macmillan.*
1919. Peace in Friendship Village. *Macmillan.*
1920. ** Miss Lulu Bett. *Appleton.*
1920. Neighbors. Play. *Huebsch.*
Uncle Jimmy. One-act play.
1920. Miss Lulu Bett. Play. *Appleton.*
1921. The Secret Way. Poems. *Macmillan.*
1923. * Faint Perfume. *Appleton.*
1924. Mister Pitt. Play made from Birth. *Appleton.*
1926. *** Preface to a Life. *Appleton.*
1927. ** Yellow Gentians and Blue. *Appleton.*

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"American Nights Entertainment," by Grant Overton. (Appleton: Doran: Doubleday: Scribner: 1923). Chapter 14.

"Authors of the Day," by Grant Overton. (Doran: 1924.) Reprints the chapter from "American Nights Entertainment."

"The Literary Spotlight, XVIII: Zona Gale," in *The Bookman* for April, 1923. Not included in the book, "The Literary Spotlight."

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ELLEN GLASGOW

THIRTY years after the appearance of her first novel, two years after the publication of her best, all are agreed that the most important thing about Ellen Glasgow is that she broke the sentimental tradition of the South. The next most important thing is accounted to be her education of women toward a new attitude in which love—in the sense of an attachment to one man—will no longer be "woman's whole existence." From another standpoint, it is felt that she has done a valuable thing in writing principally about the middle class of Southern whites, the descendants of Scotch-Irish settlers who are small independent farmers and who had been uniformly ignored by storytellers.

All these points are well-taken; but it is doubtful if they would attract a single reader. Interest in a writer's work was never stimulated or nourished by such facts. People read novels—when they do not simply seek diversion—for the revelations of the human heart that good novels afford. If, therefore, Miss Glasgow is read attentively for a quarter of a century and longer, and by an ample audience, the explanation is at once more simple and more vast. She evidently contributes to our knowledge of human nature. The other things—her breach with Southern literary tradition, her education of women, her choosing to write about the farmer class—are the means at her command.

She knows more about men than about women, but she knows chiefly men's limitations. These she lights up sharply. She does not like the acceptance, still less the downright complacency, with which most women view the

male animal. Conscious that some of the arrangements of nature put women at men's mercy, she insists that women do something to offset their disadvantage. She knows, of course, that women have always done this, by the process described as "twisting a man around her little finger," and by other, bolder means. Like many women of intelligence, she is revolted by such tactics. Why have to stoop to conquer?

But while she has a contempt for men (sometimes kindly) she adores Man. She wrote "The Romance of a Plain Man" (1909) and "One Man in His Time" (1922). Even when she is showing masculine weakness and defect, she sometimes does it remorsefully and her admiration for Man's possibilities is like a large shadow athwart her scene.

"Success for a woman," she said in 1916 or thereabouts, "must be about the same as for a man. Success for a woman means a harmonious adjustment to life." But as long as a man's quest of a harmonious adjustment is not interrupted by having babies, woman's handicap is only too apparent.

In this difficulty Miss Glasgow has kept her head. She has not torn up the social contract; she has not even advocated companionate marriage. She merely indicates that women must rearrange their emotions, which, in view of their passion for moving furniture about and trying new effects, should just be good fun. And women read her—but no one knows what they think of it all. It is pleasant to them to think that they may be capable of changing their natures. So much of what she says is true! It wouldn't do any harm if they could acquire some of this technique; men are so . . . but the men might not like it and, well, when they don't, you simply have to get around them—oh, dear! here we are back again; after such a nice forward stride, too.

II

Ellen (Anderson Gholson) Glasgow was born in Richmond, Virginia, in 1874, the daughter of Francis Thomas Glasgow and Anne Jane Gholson Glasgow. She was educated at home and when about eighteen began a systematic study of political economy and social theory. Her first novel, "The Descendant" (1897) was published anonymously, and has been characterized as "a rather morbid exposition of the development and life of an intellectual hybrid, the offspring of a low woman and a highly intellectual man." An ambitious affair for a girl of twenty-three. Miss Glasgow has referred to it as "a school-girl effort."

"The Voice of the People" (1900) was her first success and the beginning of the series of novels in which she has recorded much of the social history and political atmosphere of Virginia, from the 1850's to the present. Her earlier books are best read in this order:

"The Battle-Ground"
"The Romance of a Plain Man"
"The Voice of the People"

All of these are, to some extent, stories of Richmond. "The Battle-Ground" (1902) goes back before the Civil War and deals with the war. "The Romance of a Plain Man" (1909) is ten years after the war. "The Voice of the People" (1900) is in the 1880's.

"The Deliverance" (1904) is not a story of Richmond but no reader of Miss Glasgow's earlier work can afford to miss it. The Blakes have lost their plantation and the Fletchers, mere overseers and hired hands, have been able to buy it. Miss Glasgow remains absolutely impartial, exhibiting the good and bad in aristocrat and commoner alike; and there is a very dramatic story of revenge.

This book yields interesting implications of its author's social attitude. Class barriers have been broken down in the Virginia of the years following the Civil War, and you feel that Miss Glasgow is not sorry for it. May the best man win—but it does not follow that the under man is the best. And though class barriers are down, class distinctions are not altered. In wealth the Fletchers are still vulgar, and in poverty the Blakes have refinement. Briefly, Miss Glasgow distinguishes clearly between equality of economic opportunity, which she welcomes, and social equality, which cannot exist. If a Fletcher can come by property honestly, all right; but if he is a vulgarian he will not sit at her dinner table. A Blake may do that, rich or poor; and if he has lost his estate through his defects as a man, she will tell him, somewhere between the soup and nuts, that he deserved to lose it.

When Miss Glasgow turned to writing about women she began with "Virginia" (1913), followed it with "Life and Gabriella" (1916) and rounded off the picture with "The Builders" (1919). Later she was to do another woman in "Barren Ground" (1925) which we shall come to presently.

"In 'Virginia' I wanted to do the biography of a woman representative of the old system of chivalry, showing her in relation to that system and the changing order. Virginia's education, like that of every well-bred Southern woman of her day, was designed to paralyze her reasoning faculties and to eliminate all danger of mental restlessness. Virginia was the passive and helpless victim of the ideal of feminine self-sacrifice.

"Gabriella was the product of the same system, but instead of being used by circumstances, she used them to create her own destiny. Virginia desired happiness but did not expect it. Gabriella insisted on happiness."

Angelica in "The Builders" is another type, the para-

sitic woman who gets what she wants from life no matter how many persons are sacrificed to provide it. This novel contains one of Miss Glasgow's ideal men, the sort who might have become a great leader if Angelica had not stood in his path.

"Barren Ground" (1925) is Miss Glasgow's best novel, as "The Romantic Comedians" (1926) is her most amusing. Dorinda Oakley is of that Scotch-Irish farmer class who are called by Virginians "good people," as distinguished from "good family."[1] Wronged by Jason Greylock, with whom she is deeply in love, Dorinda is driven to New York to bear her child, which does not live. She sees that the structure of her life must be rebuilt on the ground where it was destroyed. She goes back to her village, Pedlar's Mill, and becomes a capable farmer and a landowner. In time she marries Nathan Pedlar, not because she loves him but because he can give her strength in her task. He dies, having served her purpose very well. In the end she preserves from the almshouse the incurably ill Jason, and he dies as a dependent of hers.

The quality of Miss Glasgow's writing at its best may be illustrated by a few quotations. This is from a scene where the sheriff confronts Dorinda's brother. Rufus is loud in denial.

His words and his tone struck with a chill against Dorinda's heart. Why couldn't the boy be silent? Why was he obliged, through some obliquity of nature, invariably to appear as a braggart and a bully? While she stood there listening to his furious denial of guilt, she was as positive that he had killed Peter Kittery as if she had been on the spot.

The mother intervenes, telling a lie on the boy's behalf.

[1] The classes are: Good family, good people, poor whites and negroes.

Mother love was a wonderful thing, she reflected, a wonderful and a ruinous thing! It was mother love that had helped to make Rufus the moral failure that he was, and it was mother love that was now accepting as a sacrifice the results of that failure. Mrs. Oakley was a pious and God-fearing woman . . . yet she had deliberately perjured herself in order that a worthless boy might escape the punishment which she knew he deserved.

"I'm not like that," thought Dorinda. "I couldn't have done it." At the bottom of her heart, in spite of her kinship to Rufus, there was an outraged sense, not so much of justice as of economy. The lie appeared to her less sinful than wasted.

A moment later Dorinda's mind has turned back to her own bitter experience.

"I suppose I'm different from other women," she meditated. "I may have lost feeling, or else it was left out of me when I was born. Some women would have gone on loving Jason no matter how he treated them, but I'm not made that way. There's something deep down in me that I value more than love or happiness or anything outside of myself. It may be only pride, but it comes first of all."

The climax of the novel is in the scene where Dorinda comes face to face with Jason, who whines: "If you only knew what I've suffered."

She was looking at him now with merciless eyes. For this thing she had ruined her life. Then before the thought had left her mind, she realized that in his presence, with her eyes on his face, she was farther away from him than she had been in New York. Yesterday he had had power over her senses; to-morrow he might have power again over her memory; but at this instant, while they stood there, so close together that she could feel his breath on her face, her senses and her memory alike were delivered from the old torment of love.

It would be superfluous to comment on that last sentence which has compressed in it so much that is profoundly true of the physiological and psychological nature of women.

In many of her books Miss Glasgow's wit and gift for epigram lightens her rather full and conscientious style, keeping it from dullness. But she lays her wit aside in the narration of Dorinda Oakley's life from the age of twenty to fifty. The matter is too serious for fun. As if to give herself recreation from the hard and sustained work of "Barren Ground," she followed it with "The Romantic Comedians," which is mostly sparkle. Judge Honeywell is a man of sixty who becomes infatuated with and marries a high-strung girl of twenty-three. "The reader," notes Carl Van Vechten, "assists at the gradual disillusionment of this elderly gentleman." But the disillusionment is not lasting. Dorothea Lawrence Mann observes that "it is the final thrust of Ellen Glasgow's irony toward Southern men that Judge Honeywell is not slain by his unfortunate passion for Annabel but lives to love another day—and an even younger girl."

III

Miss Glasgow's greatest service has been her adherence to reality and her disdain for the sentimental view. Contrast her with two other Virginians of her own rank and contemporary with her. Mary Johnston dealt with the Civil War but ventured not at all this side of it. Rather she escaped into historical romance and into the larger consciousness that pervades her later work. James Branch Cabell put on a vanishing cap and reappeared in his imaginary country, Poictesme, where he has consistently remained. Miss Glasgow alone accepted her environment, resolute to see what she could do with it. She has done a good deal.

As for sentimentalism, Southern literature was choked with it. There was what Mr. Van Vechten calls "the nightingale and 'yes, massa' type of fiction." There were the George W. Cable, Thomas Nelson Page, James Lane Allen and John Fox, Jr., varieties of novel. Miss Glasgow has made these appear hopelessly antiquated; pleasant—and silly. She has lived to see a younger novelist introduce new vitality into the historical novel by taking his heroes from the farmer class that she was the first to write about. This is James Boyd, author of "Drums" and "Marching On."

With respect to women and their education, Miss Glasgow is on ground less sure; but it must be remembered that she belongs to her section and her generation. She found Southern women trained to the solitary ideal of being "sweet and pleasing echoes of masculine wisdom." Marriage was their only career; and their only success could be to make the best of it. When, in one of her books, she portrays Cousin Lydia as believing, with genuine humility, that a spinster had no right to dress as well as a married woman, she is not exaggerating in the least. The South was full of women like that.

In the circumstances Miss Glasgow's concern was not with the women who wanted to do nothing but please some man, to whom submissiveness was the only gospel. Thousands of women needed the courage to refrain from hopeless marriages, to earn their own livings, to look the world in the face and keep their self-respect. Life might rob them of the fullest happiness but it should not degrade them to the meanest misery. And other women, less hardly situated, might conceivably have the burden of life lessened if they could be brought to perceive masculine traits, good and bad, in a detachment from themselves. Some girl in the clutch of physical attraction might keep her head; some wife, vexed by the male's

performance, might learn to measure it with a degree of amusement.

If sometimes Miss Glasgow has written with too much asperity, it is easily forgiven her. As she herself once said, what the South has needed most is "blood and irony." New blood—she discovered it in the "good people" that she knows so well. Affectionate but candid irony—she, the lady of One West Main Street, Richmond has worked wonders with it.

Books by Ellen Glasgow

*** Of first importance
** Of next importance
* Third in importance

1897. The Descendant. *Harper.*
1898. Phases of an Inferior Planet. *Harper.*
1900. The Voice of the People. *Doubleday.*
1902. ** The Battle-Ground. *Doubleday.*
1902. The Freeman and Other Poems. *Doubleday.*
1904. *** The Deliverance. *Doubleday.*
1906. The Wheel of Life. *Doubleday.*
1908. The Ancient Law. *Doubleday.*
1909. * The Romance of a Plain Man. *Macmillan. Doubleday.*
1911. The Miller of Old Church. *Doubleday.*
1913. ** Virginia. *Doubleday.*
1916. * Life and Gabriella. *Doubleday.*
1919. ** The Builders. *Doubleday.*
1922. * One Man in His Time. *Doubleday.*
1923. The Shadowy Third. *Doubleday.*
1925. *** Barren Ground. *Doubleday.*
1926. ** The Romantic Comedians. *Doubleday.*

Sources on Ellen Glasgow

"Ellen Glasgow," by Dorothea Lawrence Mann, with critical essays and a bibliography. Booklet published by Doubleday, Page & Company. It contains James Branch Cabell's review of "Barren Ground," the review of the same novel by Joseph

Collins, M.D., and Carl Van Vechten's review of "The Romantic Comedians."

"Ellen Glasgow's Arrow," by Grant Overton, in *The Bookman* for May, 1925.

"Ellen Glasgow," by Louise Maunsell Field. Booklet published by Doubleday, Page & Company in 1923.

"Taking the Literary Pulse," by Joseph Collins, M.D. Doran.

There is a note on Miss Glasgow in "Contemporary American Novelists: 1900-1920," by Carl Van Doren. Pages 132-134. Macmillan.

ANNA KATHARINE GREEN

THE subject of this chapter is a remarkable figure among American authors. With almost no literary gift except a power of dramatic emphasis, she possessed an extraordinary skill in the construction of the detective story. At least one of her books, "The Leavenworth Case," which must have been first published nearly forty years ago, is recalled by everybody familiar with mystery fiction. Others of her books have been republished from time to time or are still, after long lapse of years, kept in print to meet a steady demand. When at the age of seventy she published a book in which could be discerned no lessening of her peculiar skill. Yet her work was always done in the face of a full knowledge of her shortcomings as a writer, under a difficulty of expression that would have conquered almost anybody else, and in spite of a consequent discouragement by which, quite rightly and bravely, she refused to be discouraged to the stopping point.

Anna Katharine Green was born in Brooklyn in 1846, the daughter of James Wilson Green, and was graduated from the Ripley Female College, at Poultney, Vermont, in 1867. In 1884 she was married to Charles Rohlfs, of Buffalo, New York, a designer of furniture. Mr. Rohlfs had been an actor for some years with Booth and other tragedians. We are told that he commenced making furniture to furnish his own home in 1889, "finally developing a new and distinctive style both as to form and ornamental design, with patronage in Europe as well as the United States." Three children were born to the marriage.

Anna Katharine Green's superiority over most writers

of detective-mystery fiction lay in her power to ground her story on a single idea and a sufficient motive. Her readers, no doubt, seldom bothered, and in many cases were not able, to analyze so far. But they felt her power, were aware of her excellence if not of its source. Under her spell they not infrequently writhed at trite and cheap expressions, naïve sentences, ludicrous detail; yet the spell bound them.

Her method may be illustrated by some account of her story, "Dark Hollow" (1914), first as it presents itself to the reader and next as he may conceive it to have been fitted together. Lastly "the single idea and sufficient motive" which was the author's starting-point may be stated.

As the Reader Reads: Twelve years before the book opens, Algernon Etheridge had been murdered in Dark Hollow. John Scoville, keeper of a tavern, was tried and executed for the crime, swearing his innocence. Etheridge had been Judge Archibald Ostrander's closest personal friend. Circumstances compelled Judge Ostrander to preside at Scoville's trial. The Judge manifestly favored, so far as possible, the defense. Evidence against Scoville was wholly circumstantial but strong. His presence in Dark Hollow on the night of the crime was proven. Etheridge had been killed with Scoville's stick. Scoville's reputation was unsavory.

In the twelve years since the death of Etheridge Judge Ostrander has lived shut off from the world, except for his appearance on the bench. He and his son have parted for all time. The grounds are walled off by a high board fence within a high board fence. A negro manservant is the only other person in the house.

When the story begins the negro has gone forth on morning errands, unprecedentedly leaving the gate in the fence ajar. A woman in purple, heavily veiled, has

entered the grounds. The gaping neighborhood ventures in after her but does not find her. The crowd comes upon the Judge sitting erect and apparently lifeless in his house. It is, however, a cataleptic seizure. Soon afterward the negro, mortally wounded by an automobile, returns and dies trying to guard the iron door which preserves some secret of his master's.

The woman in purple turns out to be Mrs. Scoville. She sees Judge Ostrander and tells him that his son, Oliver, is in love with her daughter, Reuther. She also tells him that since her husband's execution she has become convinced that he did not kill Etheridge, and, late as it is, she is determined to do what she can to uncover new evidence.

In succeeding chapters, with cumulative and sensational climaxes, we follow Mrs. Scoville's quest. There is the shadow of the man in a peaked cap seen advancing into Dark Hollow at the hour of the crime. There is the picture of Oliver Ostrander secreted in his father's house with a band of black painted across the eyes. There is the point of a knife blade in the stick with which Etheridge was killed, and the blade from which it was broken lies folded in Oliver's desk. A peaked cap hangs in Oliver's closet! When circumstance seems to drive home conviction of Oliver's guilt, Judge Ostrander shows Mrs. Scoville a written statement that establishes the fact of an earlier murder by her husband. But the Judge allows her to look at the document a moment too long; the end has been tampered with, it is a forgery.

Oliver must be found; there is a race between agents of the district attorney and messengers dispatched by the Judge. Tracked to a remote place in the Adirondacks, he takes to further flight. By a desperate drop over a cliff, landing in a tree, he has reached a little rail-

road station ahead of pursuit. The train is not due for fifteen minutes.

" 'The train south?'

" 'Yes, and the train north. They pass here.' "

Shall he return home at his father's summons or escape to Canada?

As the Reader may conceive the story to have been fitted together: Judge Ostrander has to be the murderer because he is the person least likely; Etheridge was his dearest friend. Oliver has to be put under dire suspicion or it will not be plausible that the Judge should finally confess. By making Judge Ostrander the murderer, his son is put more on a plane with Reuther Scoville—who, after all, as we discover, was not the daughter of a murderer. Oliver must be cleared in order to make his marriage with Reuther admissible.

As the story was actually constructed: The author started with a single striking conception—that of a man who should, in a fit of passion, slay his closest friend and who undertakes his own fit punishment. Judge Ostrander imprisons himself, except when he must appear in public, in a convict's cell in his own home. He sends his son away for all time; that even the eyes of his son's portrait may not look on his father, murderer and coward, a black band is painted across the picture. A double fence is built to guard against intrusion by so much as an eye at a knothole.

On this solid foundation of a single life and this sufficient motive of a single stricken conscience the story spreads out, like an expansive, leafy plant from a tap root. The first step is to get clearly in mind biographies of several people. In particular, every aspect of their relations with each other—whether probably to be used in the telling of the story or not—must be clearly in mind.

It is next necessary to construct the crime. A period

of twenty minutes to half an hour, at a given place, is in question. A map (used as an illustration in the book) shows the place with respect to all near-by places. But Etheridge, Scoville, Mrs. Scoville, Judge Ostrander and Oliver were all in or near Dark Hollow during this half hour. Why was each there and what was each doing? Just what could—and did—each say, hear and see? The author must determine *all* these things in order to spare the reader what is irrelevant as well as to control the extent and order of disclosures in the story.

The author, then, has every inch of ground at her fingertips and every instant clear. There is room for improvisation only in the lesser climaxes at the ends of chapters. Most of these are planned in advance but an occasional inspiration may find its place. One has got Oliver to the lonely railroad station, perhaps, when the idea of *two* trains, bound in opposite directions, flashes into the mind. Immediately the dramatic struggle of his mind is substituted for some lesser incident of suspense.

All the nice little expediencies by means of which, in his innocence, the reader may have imagined the story to have been fitted together are easily taken care of if the fundamental building of the story be right. One cannot say: "I will make Judge Ostrander the murderer because he is the least likely person." One must first conceive Judge Ostrander. One must say: "He was the murderer" —and then see to it that he *appears* to be the least likely person.

It will be observed that "Dark Hollow" complies absolutely with the first law of the mystery story—that the unknown agent must be in the tale from the outset. Otherwise he is nothing but a puppet contrived to help the author out of serious difficulty. According to his shrewdness, the reader is given a fair and reasonable chance to identify Judge Ostrander as the criminal. The

author, though disclosing clews in a predetermined order, supplies none that are false or misleading.

Without ever creating a character comparable with Sherlock Holmes, Anna Katharine Green constructed mysteries more baffling than those solved by Conan Doyle's detective. She never resorted to exotic coloring to conceal thinness of story; she did not depend on ciphers or codes; she never found it necessary to carry the reader through generations nor to employ undue coincidences. When pained by the lack of literary quality in her writing, it is possible to recall that she filled all the drawers of a massive bureau with discarded manuscript in the effort to write well a single book, "The Leavenworth Case." And in the end she wrote it very badly, and it mattered little, so ingenious and satisfying was the story she had to tell.

Books by Anna Katharine Green

*** Of first importance
** Of next importance
* Third in importance

*** The Leavenworth Case. *Burt.* Dramatized in 1892.
A Strange Disappearance.
The Sword of Damocles.
* Hand and Ring. Republished in 1924. *Dodd, Mead.*
The Mill Mystery.
Marked "Personal."
Miss Hurd—An Enigma.
Behind Closed Doors.
Cynthia Wakeham's Money.
Dr. Izard.
The Old Stone House and Other Stories.
7 to 12.
X. Y. Z.
The Doctor, His Wife and the Clock.
That Affair Next Door.

Lost Man's Lane.
Agatha Webb.
Risifi's Daughter: A Drama.
A Difficult Problem and Other Stories.
*** The Circular Study. *Doubleday.*
One of My Sons.
** The Filigree Ball. *Bobbs-Merrill.*
1894. The Defense of the Bride and Other Poems. *Putnam.*
1905. The Millionaire Baby. *Burt.*
1905. The House in the Mist. *Bobbs-Merrill.*
1905. ** The Amethyst Box. *Bobbs-Merrill.*
1906. * The Chief Legatee. *Dodd, Mead.*
1907. The Mayor's Wife. *Bobbs-Merrill.*
1909. Three Thousand Dollars.
1910. * The House of the Whispering Pines. *Putnam. Burt.*
1911. *** Initials Only. *Dodd, Mead. Burt.*
1912. ** Masterpieces of Mystery. Republished in 1919 as Room No. 3. *Dodd, Mead.*
1914. *** Dark Hollow. *Dodd, Mead. Burt.*
1915. The Golden Slipper and Other Problems for Violet Strange.
1916. * The Woman in the Alcove. *Burt.*
1917. ** The Mystery of the Hasty Arrow. *Dodd, Mead.*
1922. * The Step on the Stair; or, You Are the Man. *Dodd, Mead.*

CORRA HARRIS

THERE have been a great many novels as well as autobiographies that were "human documents" but in general the production of such a work does not witness the advent of a new author. The more impressive the autobiographical first novel, the more uncertain it is whether this newcomer has anything to offer except his own experience.

After the publication, in 1910, of "A Circuit Rider's Wife," only those who knew Corra Harris personally could have made a reasonably sound prediction about her future as a writer.

But she had, as such a one could know, a personality of her own, an exceptional knowledge of and an unquenchable interest in everyday human nature. In particular she knew a good deal about married life in average conditions and surroundings. Perhaps it would be more exact to say that she knew much about happy marriages, for hers had been one. Autobiography aside, she had something to go on with.

All her subsequent books have been permeated by her downright appraisal of men and women rendered in a homely idiom that borders on the vernacular. In her fashion she is something of a moralist and she constantly interrupts her narrative to generalize about masculine and feminine natures. The fact that these sums of wisdom are amusing and true does not always offset the irritation of their intrusion.

Yet at her brightest she pierces like Rochefoucauld, but with a ray of sunlight rather than a surgical probe.

I would advise women to leave the souls of men alone, especially their adolescent souls. They consist entirely of amorphous spiritual substances. They have as many rings of sentiment and vaporous eloquence around them as the planet Saturn. It is easy to guide one of the pulpy things into the church; but when you have done it, you do not know whether you have committed a blasphemy or an act of salvation.

II

Corra (May White) Harris was born on a cotton plantation at Farm Hill, Elbert County, Georgia, in 1869. She was the daughter of Tinsley Tucker White and Mary Elizabeth Matthews White. Her father owned the plantation, at least nominally; like most of its kind in that day it was mortgaged to the hilt. Some instruction at home and a little time at a local seminary served for the girl's education. "I do not know how old I was; probably fifteen. But I had read all the poetry and the histories in our very considerable library. I had finished the Odes of Horace, Paley's 'Moral Philosophy,' that huge book on the 'Evidences of Christianity,' and done something vague in algebra. But I could not parse a simple sentence or work a sum in fractions."

When nearly eighteen she was married to Lundy Howard Harris, who shortly became an itinerant preacher, or circuit rider, in the Methodist Church South. A few years later he became the Greek teacher in Emory College, Oxford, Georgia. He was again a circuit rider and was stationed at the place called Celestial Bells in "A Circuit Rider's Wife." Eventually, and rather more through his wife's efforts than his own—he was both saintly and unworldly—Mr. Harris was transferred to Nashville, "the Jerusalem of Southern Methodism,"

where in the work of the Methodist Board of Education he abided happily until his death.

His wife had written a few fiction stories for newspapers and then, in 1899, had replied with a striking letter to an editorial article in the *Independent* magazine on a Georgia lynching. She had been reviewing novels after that for the *Independent*. Settled in Nashville, she collaborated on a book, "The Jessica Letters," with Paul Elmer More, then literary editor of the *Independent*, and wrote the Brasstown Valley stories appearing in the *American Magazine*, 1905-9.

"A Circuit Rider's Wife" was submitted, in the form of a series of sketches, to the *Saturday Evening Post*. Mr. Lorimer, the editor, told Mrs. Harris what to do with it to make it a serial. Its publication in the *Post* brought success at one stroke. Lundy Harris lived long enough to understand the fullness of that success and to convince himself, contentedly, that he was not the circuit rider. "No, I cannot see myself in it—the man I know I am."

He died in the autumn of 1910; about ten years later Corra Harris lost their only child, a daughter, Faith Harris Leech, who had been her collaborator in the letters composing "From Sunup to Sundown" (1919). She had, after her husband's death, found an old Cherokee Indian cabin with some acres of forest and a valley near Rydal, Georgia. Here she constructed a roomy house, log cabin style, and here she lives and works.

She has never surpassed "A Circuit Rider's Wife." Her autobiographical volume, "My Book and Heart" (1924), despite its discursiveness, supplies the factual background.

Books by Corra Harris

1904. The Jessica Letters (with Paul Elmer More).
1910. A Circuit Rider's Wife. *Altemus.*

1910. Eve's Second Husband. *Altemus.*
1912. The Recording Angel. *Doubleday.*
1913. In Search of a Husband. *Doubleday.*
1915. The Co-Citizens. *Doubleday.*
1916. A Circuit Rider's Widow. *Doubleday.*
1918. Making Her His Wife. *Doubleday.*
1919. From Sunup to Sundown (with Faith Harris Leech, her daughter). *Doubleday*
1920. Happily Married. *Doran.*
1921. My Son. *Doran.*
1922. The Eyes of Love. *Doran.*
1923. A Daughter of Adam. *Doran.*
1924. The House of Helen. *Doran.*
1924. My Book and Heart. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1925. As a Woman Thinks. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1925. Flapper Anne. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1927. The Happy Pilgrimage. *Houghton Mifflin.*

Sources on Corra Harris

"My Book and Heart" and "The Happy Pilgrimage" are autobiographical. Houghton Mifflin.

"The Autobiography of Corra Harris," by Esther Forbes, front page of the book section of the *Boston Evening Transcript* for April 12, 1924.

HELEN R. HULL

Often more than four novels are necessary to achieve a sure footing; never more than four are necessary to show the stuff that is in one. And in the case of Helen R. Hull a substantial gift was clearly evident with her second book, "Labyrinth" (1923), which remains about the best contemporary novel on the problem of a woman's marriage and her career. At the time of its appearance, Mr. A. S. M. Hutchinson had just presented the same theme in his novel called "This Freedom"; and Miss Hull's honest, exact picture contrasted extremely with the Hutchinson hysteria.

Helen Rose Hull was born in Albion, Michigan, the daughter of Warren Charles Hull and Louise McGill Hull. She studied at Michigan State College, the University of Michigan and the University of Chicago, and taught English at Wellesley and Barnard. Since 1916 she has been on the faculty of Columbia University, since 1923 as an assistant professor of English.

Her first novel, "Quest" (1922), is a study of an American family where the father and mother have contending personalities. The home climate is emotionally unhealthy for the children, especially Jean, who has a personality of her own and intelligence and subtlety as part of it. Jean's endeavor to conform to the standards of life and belief prepared for women in general and her slow growth into individuality are the main story.

In "Labyrinth" we follow the experiences of Catherine, housewife and something besides. She finds that the details of living can be managed but she also finds that this doesn't fulfill the needs of her personal life. The book

expresses, without the slightest distortion of reality, Miss Hull's double idea: that women have a right to work of their own and a terrible need of it, and that they cannot manage both work and marriage until men assume a different attitude.

"The Surry Family" (1925) is much more grim, much more ambitious, also. The family of the title live in a small Michigan town. Paul and Marjy, the son and daughter, are beset by their mother's love and their father's clumsy domination. Paul makes an unfortunate early marriage and Marjy undertakes some adventures in friendship. There is a gradual amelioration of the intense misery in which the book begins.

It is pleasant to feel that Miss Hull's fourth novel is her best to date. "Islanders" (1927) sees women set off on islands of monotony and futility while men sail freely away; but it sees this against a background of some color and movement and it shows, in its central figure, a woman who was anything but futile. Ellen Dacey becomes the mainstay of her family when her father, her brother and her lover join the rush of the Forty-niners for gold. Ellen's courage brings the family through lean years in the little Michigan town. When the adventurers come home—such as do come home—Ellen discovers that to them she is just a woman, an old maid, "An Telly." Yet during the years that follow Ellen is the person of power in the successive dramas of three generations; her sympathy and understanding, affecting, in turn, her brother, her nephews, and her grandniece, Anne.

Books by Helen R. Hull

1922. Quest. *Macmillan.*
1923. Labyrinth. *Macmillan.*
1925. The Surry Family. *Macmillan.*
1927. Islanders. *Macmillan.*

FANNIE HURST

Superficially, no two writers have seemed easier of comparison than Fannie Hurst and Edna Ferber. They are almost the same age; they both were born and "raised" in the Middle West; they both began as brilliant short story writers, graduating into novelists. The superficial bases for the comparison extend further into the class of people they write about—or classes—and even to some apparent degree to their methods of writing. But at bottom the cleavage is great; as years go by and each produces her books a vast difference is discernible. To most readers it presents itself as a difference of prose style; but its real source is a great difference of temperament and outlook.

Miss Ferber is entirely finite in her outlook. She can understand and portray—none better—the emotions of a mother, a son, a daughter, a girl in love. She has the sense of largeness, but it is a largeness of normal human emotion. She has perspective, but it is the perspective of ordinary human experience and it does not extend beyond the longest lifetime. When one of her characters suffers racking grief, it is over the disappointment of some ideal that everybody can grasp—as in the case of Dirk de Jong, in "So Big," despairing because he is not and cannot be the man his mother visioned. And Selina's vision? The entirely finite and practical aspiration for Dirk to become a great architect.

But with Fannie Hurst the case is quite otherwise. Even in the short stories with which she began there is something not fully comprehended in average emotional

capacity, something in excess of the normal. It has led her steadily in the direction of subjects that Edna Ferber would not touch—would not really see as subjects. One cannot imagine Miss Ferber writing "Lummox" or "Appassionata." For that matter, one cannot imagine Miss Hurst putting the satirical edge on the last thirty pages of "Show Boat."

Only a stupid person would esteem one above the other, except as a matter of personal taste in reading. It is not even a question of outer and inner life; it goes to the very roots of life. If you belong to the majority of mankind, inner experience has no aspect that Edna Ferber does not convey. But the minority for whom and of whom Fannie Hurst preferably writes is large.

She unites the mystical and sensuous elements of human existence in what is often far from being a balanced ration. If sensuousness seems to predominate, that is because the sensuous approach to mysticism is commonest—or perhaps only because it is natural to her. She loves a kind of opulent splendor but it does not satisfy her in itself. You realize this as you look about the big studio room in her New York apartment, filled with luxurious art, all of it religious in origin.

"A President Is Born" (1928) is the most ambitious work she has done so far. But "Lummox" (1923) is still her most self-expressive and interesting achievement. She is so young that anything resembling a final verdict on her performance would be silly.

II

Fannie Hurst was born in Hamilton, Ohio, in 1889. "Who's Who in America" gives her birthplace as St. Louis and Miss Hurst explains: "I usually pass the honor on to St. Louis, since I was taken to Hamilton for the ex-

clusive purpose of being born there in an old grandparental homestead, and returned to St. Louis while still in the beety, underdone infantile stage." She was the daughter of Samuel Hurst and Rose Koppel Hurst. She was graduated from Washington University in 1909 and set out immediately to conquer New York.

She had been writing since fourteen, or younger. At fourteen she had submitted a masque in blank verse to the *Saturday Evening Post*. At eighteen she had submitted twenty-one stories to the same weekly, all vainly. She was not yet twenty when she arrived in New York. Her own statement conveys more forcibly what she was up against than any "graphic" picture of the young writer's struggle:

"For a stretch of twenty-six months, without even meeting an editor, writer or publisher, absolutely ignorant of the game, and an entire stranger in New York, I wrote, peddled, rewrote, re-peddled, without so much as one acceptance or word of encouragement."

Her parents tried all manner of persuasion to get her to give up the fight and come home. Once they cut off her allowance. But her mother, repenting in secret, sent a check; and the same week a woman acquaintance who had heard of the family strategy sent an entirely unsolicited loan of $300.

The twenty-one rejection slips from the *Saturday Evening Post* swelled to thirty-six. Meanwhile, to get verisimilitude, Miss Hurst worked as a lunchroom waitress, sweatshop worker, nursemaid, sales girl; took a passage across the Atlantic in the steerage; lived for a month over an Armenian tobacconist's shop in New York's Syrian quarter; attended a graduate course in Anglo-Saxon at Columbia Universitv and one in lampshade-making at Wanamaker's.

All in all, it took her twelve years to meet her first editor—Robert H. Davis, then of *Munsey's*. He did something to make up for the long ordeal by the great encouragement he gave her.

After that, success mounted swiftly. Miss Hurst's first book, a collection of stories, "Just Around the Corner," was published in 1914, five years after her advent in New York. In 1915 she was married to Jacques S. Danielson, of New York, a pianist and musician, but the marriage was not announced until the end of five happy years.

III

The short stories are not in the province of this volume.[1] We may take up her novels in the order of their appearance.

"Star Dust" (1919) would have been a creditable first novel from the hand of any one less gifted. There is plenty of her skill as a writer of fiction in it, in various scenes and episodes. But the thing is consecutive rather than an organized whole, as a novel should be. Miss Hurst had yet to get the "feel" and tempo of a novel, so different from the short story stride.

Readers who came to "Lummox" (1923) from "Star Dust" were fairly staggered. Whatever Miss Hurst had needed to learn, after that first performance, she had amply learned—and more. Her huge, homely, inarticulate servant-girl represented something new to fiction and the method of presentation was equally new. There were technical imperfections here and there. Bertha in the sailors' boarding house, aware of the sour smells, is perhaps one. But Miss Hurst had to place the reader by Bertha's side; and those smells were the very first thing

[1] For a competent discussion of her as a short story writer, see the chapter on Fannie Hurst in "Our Short Story Writers," by Blanche Colton Williams, published by Dodd, Mead & Company.

of which the reader, unused to such localities, would be overpoweringly conscious. The smells, or rather the sharpened perception of them, are thus a necessary compromise.

But as nearly as words on paper could enable one to live Bertha's life, Fannie Hurst made you live it; and this without resort to the dredging of the subconscious employed by James Joyce and some other experimentalists. In doing this, Miss Hurst made of Bertha a memorable figure—dumb, infinitely kind and tender, loving, coarse, animal, truly maternal. It is not too much to say that the heroine of "Lummox" belongs with the great creations of fiction.

"Appassionata" (1925) is much more debatable. Here we have the story of a strongly sensuous girl frustrated in love, moving toward a sublimation of sex, drawn more and more toward religious mysticism, in the end becoming a nun. So far as the story involved Roman Catholicism, there were Catholic reviews which gave it unqualified praise and there were Catholics who received the novel with profound distaste. Not only the subject but the intensity with which this author was bound to treat it were unfortunate in necessarily involving questions of taste and temperament. If, however, the nearly impossible be accomplished, and the reader manage to put aside any personal repulsion, it is probable that he will arrive at the conviction that the heroine is consistently delineated, from start to finish. And one cannot well ask more of an author—unless, indeed, it were to ask that the subject be not treated. This girl was of a certain sort to begin with; and at the end she is still the same sort. One has to realize that she might as easily have gone as far in quite the opposite direction. . . .

"Mannequin" (1926) can be ignored. In a playful

moment, Miss Hurst outlined the sort of story which would likely win the award in a contest for a large prize, then offering. She allowed herself to be persuaded to enter the outline in the contest. It was as if she had walked into a trap that was promptly sprung. She found herself compelled by the terms to write the story, once her outline had been selected. All control of her story was lost to her. It can be said that she did her best to redeem what had begun as a joke and continued as a torture.

And now, with "A President Is Born" (1928) she offers us the biggest canvas she has yet attempted. It is an imposing piece of work, this novel which has in it the sense of New World destinies. In every respect it is likely to exceed any previous book in popularity. Incontestably, its appeal is wider and deeper. Yet it does not displace "Lummox," however closely it may stand beside that second novel.

Books by Fannie Hurst

*** Of first importance
** Of next importance
* Third in importance

1914. Just Around the Corner. Short stories. *Harper.*
1915. Every Soul Hath Its Song. Short stories. *Harper.*
1916. * Gaslight Sonatas. Short stories. *Harper.*
1918. * Humoresque. Short stories. *Harper.*
1919. Star Dust. Novel. *Harper.*
1921. ** The Vertical City. Short stories. *Harper.*
1923. *** Lummox. Novel. *Harper.*
1925. * Appassionata. Novel. *Knopf.*
1926. Mannequin. Novel. *Knopf.*
1927. ** The Song of Life. Short stories. *Knopf.*
1928. *** A President Is Born. Novel. *Harper.*

Sources on Fannie Hurst

"The Literary Spotlight," edited by John Farrar. Chapter on Fannie Hurst. (Doran: 1924.)

"Our Short Story Writers," by Blanche Colton Williams. Chapter on Fannie Hurst. (Dodd, Mead.)

INEZ HAYNES IRWIN

THE creation of a popular character too often keeps an author giving encores. Inez Haynes Irwin did enough Phœbe-and-Ernest stories to make two or three books before settling down to a more substantial kind of work in her novel, "Gertrude Haviland's Divorce" (1925). She has followed it with a beautifully sympathetic novel of a young boy, his mother, his father and his father's second wife—the divorce being in the remote background. "Gideon" (1927) merits far more attention than anything else Mrs. Irwin has done. The boy, Gideon, is greatly attached to his mother. He feels cold toward his father, a distinguished man, for her sake. He has a fierce prejudice against the woman his father has married, although he has never seen her. For that matter, he scarcely knows his father. At sixteen or thereabouts the time comes when he must spend a summer in his father's establishment. The book is the story of that summer.

Inez Haynes Irwin was born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1873, the daughter of Gideon Haynes and Emma Jane Hopkins Haynes. She was educated in Boston and at Radcliffe College. She was married to Rufus Hamilton Gillmore, of Boston, in 1897, and to Will Irwin, the writer, in 1916. She was conspicuous in the campaign that gained equal suffrage for women.

BOOKS BY INEZ HAYNES IRWIN

1908. JUNE JEOPARDY. *Huebsch.*
1910. MAIDA'S LITTLE SCHOOL. *Huebsch.*
1910. PHŒBE AND ERNEST. *Holt.*
1911. JANEY. *Holt.*

1912. Phœbe, Ernest and Cupid. *Holt.*
1914. Angel Island. *Holt.*
1915. The Ollivant Orphans. *Holt.*
1916. The Californiacs. *Robertson.*
1917. The Lady of Kingdoms. *Doran.*
1919. The Happy Years. *Holt.*
1919. The Native Son. *Robertson.*
1921. The Story of the Woman's Party. *Harcourt.*
1921. Out of the Air. *Harcourt.*
1925. Gertrude Haviland's Divorce. *Harper.*
1927. Gideon. *Harper.*

MARY JOHNSTON

This author offers more difficulty to the majority of novel readers than any other in this book. For whatever the difficulty of Nathalie Sedgwick Colby, she is downright enough somewhere in her paragraph; whatever the difficulty of Fannie Hurst, her images stamp themselves on the reader's five senses. If one ranges as widely as possible, picking up a writer like Evelyn Scott for comparison, the inevitable answer is that only a special audience attempts to read her. But at one time or another, everybody has read Mary Johnston, anybody is likely to read her now.

There is no trouble, of course, with her books between 1898 and 1918, between "Prisoners of Hope" and "Foes." Here is an array of historical novels so clear and direct that a child cannot abandon one, so mature and searching that an adult asks nothing more. And what an array it is! "To Have and To Hold," for Colonial days; "Lewis Rand" for the years of the new-born republic; "The Long Roll" and "Cease Firing" for the Civil War—together they tower over all other fiction of the Civil War period. These are only the high spots; but who shall show himself on higher? Not Winston Churchill; not, as yet, young James Boyd; nor any one you can name. Abroad? Sabatini? Perhaps, but no book of Sabatini's has the blend of realism and panorama one finds in "The Long Roll" and its companion book. Tolstoy's great drama of "War and Peace"? Well, yes. . . . There is a match, and no doubt more than a match, for Miss Johnston.

But the truth is that this woman, had she not been a born novelist, would have been an outstanding historian;

had she not been born a novelist, she had been a philosopher to rank with the best among her male contemporaries—with Santayana, with Bergson, and ahead of the facile William James. It is this, really, that causes the trouble—the birth of the philosopher in her so late in life, when people had trained themselves, with eager willingness, to expect only the truths of human personality in the conventions of historical form.

Of the Mary Johnston who has been writing since 1918 —who has produced such novels of an other-historical sort as "Foes," "Michael Forth," "1492," "The Slave Ship" and "The Great Valley"—two things must be chronicled, neither easy. One is her growth as a mystic, the other is her search for a new historical method. The two are intertwined and can only be explained together. The attempt to do that will be made.

II

Mary Johnston was born at Buchanan, Botetourt County, Virginia, in 1870, the daughter of John William Johnston and Elizabeth Alexander Johnston. The child was not strong and was taught at home, first by her Scots grandmother, then by an aunt. Her father, Major Johnston, was a Confederate veteran, a lawyer and ex-member of the Virginia Legislature. The house was full of books; the girl read them all, and found histories most engrossing. The family moved to Birmingham, Alabama, and, Mary being sixteen, an attempt was made to send her to school at Atlanta. In a few months ill-health compelled her to return home where, a year later, her mother died. As the eldest, direction of the household fell to her. In her twenties, and while living for a period in a New York apartment, she began a romance of colonial Virginia in the seventeenth century, writing much of it in a quiet corner of Central Park, so as to

be outdoors. This was "Prisoners of Hope" (1898), her first novel, and a success. But her next book, "To Have and To Hold" (1900) became a best seller of record-making proportions for its day. Its literary merits are remembered now, over a quarter of a century later, as setting it apart from the flood of historical fiction then current.

Miss Johnston went over most of Europe and into North Africa in a quest for health which was not to be very successful for long years. After her father's death she lived for some time at 110 East Franklin Street, Richmond, Virginia. Then she built a home, "Three Hills," near Warm Springs, Virginia, where she has resided since.

III

She began as a writer of historical romance with a keen eye for the picturesque and a genuinely dramatic method —the method that consists in saying just enough, not too much. The end of the first chapter of "To Have and To Hold" illustrates the point prettily. A shipload of maidens has arrived at Jamestown, Virginia, in the early days of that settlement. A friend traveling by has told Ralph Percy about it and counseled him to go to town and get a wife. Percy rejects the idea; but shortly after finds himself lonely in a house suddenly cheerless. He tries to read Master Shakespeare's plays and cannot. Idly he begins dicing. His mind goes back to the English manorhouse that had been his home.

To-morrow would be my thirty-sixth birthday. All the numbers that I cast were high. "If I throw ambs-ace," I said, with a smile for my own caprice, "curse me if I do not take Rolfe's advice!"

I shook the box and clapped it down upon the table, then lifted it, and stared with a lengthening face at what

it had hidden; which done, I diced no more, but put out my lights and went soberly to bed.

Or take the ending of "Lewis Rand" (1908). Rand has killed Ludwell Cary and has not been found out. At length he walks into the sheriff's office to give himself up. The news gets abroad, a crowd gathers, and the boy minding the sheriff's door is the hero of the hour.

"I didn't hear much before Mr. Garrett sent me away, but I heard why he gave himself up. I thought it wasn't much of a reason—"

The crowd pressed closer. "What was it, Michael, what was it?"

"It sounds foolish," answered the boy, "but I've got it right. He said he must have sleep."

In "The Long Roll" we meet Stonewall Jackson for the first time with the eyes of those about him and with the same mixture of observation, hearsay and conjecture. Notice the irrelevant detail and its effect in making a real man in place of a now legendary figure:

First Brigade headquarters was a tree—an especially big tree—a little removed from the others. Beneath it stood a kitchen chair and a wooden table, requisitioned from the nearest cabin and scrupulously paid for. At one side was an extremely small tent, but Brigadier-General T. J. Jackson rarely occupied it. He sat beneath the tree, upon the kitchen chair, his feet, in enormous cavalry boots, planted precisely before him, his hands rigid at his sides. Here he transacted the business of each day, and here, when it was over, he sat facing the North. An awkward, inarticulate, and peculiar man, with strange notions about his health and other matters, there was about him no breath of grace, romance, or pomp of war. He was ungenial, ungainly, with large hands and feet, with poor eyesight and a stiff address.

There did not lack spruce and handsome youths in his command who were vexed to the soul by the idea of being led to battle by such a figure. The facts that he had fought very bravely in Mexico, and that he had for the enemy a cold and formidable hatred were for him; most other things against him. He drilled his troops seven hours a day. His discipline was of the sternest, his censure a thing to make the boldest officer blanch. A blunder, a slight negligence, any disobedience of orders —down came reprimand, suspension, arrest with an iron certitude, a relentlessness quite like Nature's. Apparently he was without imagination. He had but little sense of humor, and no understanding of a joke. He drank water and sucked lemons for dyspepsia, and fancied that the use of pepper had caused a weakness in his left leg. He rode a raw-boned nag named Little Sorrell, he carried his sabre in the oddest fashion, and said "oblike" instead of "oblique." He found his greatest pleasure in going to the Presbyterian Church twice on Sundays and to prayer meetings through the week. Now and then there was a gleam in his eye that promised something, but the battles had not begun, and his soldiers hardly knew what it promised.

In these two Civil War books the realist comes out strongly. You will find it in the battle scenes in large and in little. Steve Dagg, the coward, who sees a shell explode between two men carrying a bundle of powder, is a detail as unheroic as the stuff served up to us since the World War. "Steve put down his musket, laid his forehead upon the rail before him, and vomited." But there is a capacity far beyond realism of detail—there is realism of mood, as in the moving picture of the funeral of Stonewall Jackson. There, with marked effect, Miss Johnston narrows her focus. We see the dead hero borne past the effigies of heroes and into the Capitol, then into one room of the Capitol, and rested at last before a single

object in that room. Immediately, in the next paragraph, your eye is lifted from the calm face among the lilies to the Chair, then drawn to the room itself, the Virginia Hall of Delegates, then to the building, the Capitol of a cause many men will die for. As the eye ranges abroad the mind grasps all that this cause can imply. . . .

The daylong procession at the bier is briefly pictured, then "The Long Roll" ends as it should, with the drama of a name unspoken, with the sure promise of greater drama to come:

Then there came an artilleryman, a gunner of the Horse Artillery. Gray-eyed, broad-browed, he stood his moment and gazed upon the dead soldier among the lilies. "Hooker yet upon the Rappahannock," he said. "We must have him across the Potomac, and we must ourselves invade Pennsylvania."

Lee. And Gettysburg.

IV

"If one has suffered much from illness and pain, one is very likely to have an occasional moment in which one returns to life newly washed, like the world in trembling freshness and sunlight on a morning after storm. If one stands on a Virginia hill, or a hill anywhere, one may sometimes have a distinct awareness that the length and breadth and depth round about and below are only a kind of length and breadth and descent to a creature measuring them with his legs; even the eye seems to declare that genuine dimensions are elsewhere.

"Stand on the hill one day, return to it one, five or ten years afterward, standing in the same place. It is quite possible that nothing has changed in the scene about you. A certain time has passed, but you, to yourself, haven't changed. You have grown a little older, but the essential *you* is not anybody else.

"Suddenly you realize that time is not a dimension, either, any more than the length and breadth round about or the drop to the valley below; and that as long as you are *you* and no one else, the day, the year or the century would make no genuine difference. The only distance or direction lies between the unchanging *you* and somebody else. You are really no farther from Balboa discovering the Pacific from a Panama summit than if you were standing beside him now sharing the discovery; the direction is from your spirit to his, from his to yours, and the distance is neither lessened nor increased by race, nationality, religion, leagues or centuries.

"That is, instead of merely acquiring the notion of the fourth dimension of mathematics, you have come to see that all the so-called dimensions, length, breadth, height, time and imaginable others are merely conveniences of earthly existence, or necessities of earthly existence, like eating and breathing.

"As you stand on the hill, you are alone and yet not alone. The physical you is alone, but the unchanging *you* is one of a company whom you can identify only to the extent of what you may have read or heard about them. In the company will be Francis of Assisi, Joan of Arc, Spinoza, Ludwig van Beethoven, Cardinal Newman, William Blake, Walt Whitman—to mention a few of various times and countries—as well as countless others. . . .

"This continuous human experience came to Mary Johnston. . . . The sense of passing the boundaries of time and space was facilitated by her devotion to history and her strongly developed novelist's imagination. Shortly after she was forty, therefore, she came to a day when, for an hour or part of an hour, she had access to a state of knowledge, of sympathy, of understanding which is so sane that it infuses its sanity into every act of living and so joyous that those to whom the experience

is vouchsafed can throw aside every lesser joy. After that first experience Mary Johnston waited for it to renew itself, and gradually what had come as a miracle remained as a human faculty. . . . You know how your mind will pass behind the stars while your feet yet continue to tread firm soil. That is a feeble likeness to the thing." [1]

V

Such a mystical experience is bound enormously to affect the work of any artist. The effect is sometimes disastrous to art, success in which absolutely depends on the worker's power to control his material in the interests of emotion. Many people, reading "Foes" (1918), thought Miss Johnston must have become a little mad; many others suspected a conversion to some sentimentally vague Universal Religion. Here was a story of eighteenth-century Scotland and a capital story at that. A lasting feud, a long chase, a crescendo of hatred and peril. And then "the hero, a fairly dour and hard-headed Scot of the Culloden era, is pictured lying in the grass of the Roman Campagna and comprehending, all of a sudden, that Everything is One. Christ and Buddha are One. 'There swam before him in the light, Oneness, Unity.' The reader who cherished the memory of 'To Have and To Hold,' or even the later memory of 'The Long Roll' and 'Cease Firing,' was heard to exclaim: 'This stuff about Oneness and Unity! I don't get it.'" Was it a good story gone silly? By no means. "Foes" is as much a story of sublime forgiveness as John Masefield's "The Everlasting Mercy." But Miss Johnston was having a hard time to make her art keep pace with her personal growth.

We must now have a look at that growth and its double

[1] From the chapter on Miss Johnston (Chapter 24) in "Cargoes for Crusoes," by Grant Overton (Appleton: Doran: Little, Brown: 1924).

perplexity. Such an inner illumination as she had experienced clamors for direct expression. Hence the hero with Oneness swimming before him. But this direct expression is quite unintelligible to all except the few who have had the same thing happen to them. Not only does the Thing intrude directly, let It once get Its foot in the crack of the story door and It will push the story out of house and home. This didn't happen in "Foes" but came even more dangerously close to happening in the next two books. Not until the Thing has been lived with for a while does It cease to be an intruder and become a builder. By the time Miss Johnston wrote "Silver Cross" (1922) her mystical experience was a disciplined part of her life. In "Silver Cross" and subsequent books it has built her story, instead of trying to impose itself on a story whose foundations it had not laid and whose windows gave it no outlook.

In the other respect Miss Johnston was advantaged. In this strange and wonderful erasure of dimension there lay, somewhere beyond, if she could find the approach to it, a new historical method. The ability to stand beside Balboa

Silent upon a peak in Darien

should mean an ability to reproduce his "wild surmise" as no one else has ever conveyed it. But perhaps not? For it was part of the experience that one felt the separateness of souls and the distance between them with a keener reality, an almost physical sensation.

It is no part of this chapter to assess these spiritual and technical values in themselves; and one is restrained from an attempt to determine Miss Johnston's success with them by sheer ignorance. They are like new chemical elements the properties of which are unknown, nor do they exist in the earth or air about us; they must

be drawn down from a star. But they can be found, like concentrations of quicksilver, all through "Michael Forth" (1919), a novel which caused many readers to throw up their hands by its frank transcendentalism. This book, republished in 1926, contains some beautiful stuff, quite apart from its spiritual esthetic. It is the inner adventure of a soul living in Miss Johnston's own time and visiting places that, for the most part, she has seen. No one who is curious about the background of her work in these last ten years can afford to neglect it. All that she can communicate in the imperfect beauty of words, is here.

Of these books since 1918 none surpasses "1492," which followed "Silver Cross." The subject, of course, is Columbus's voyage. Such a journey into the unknown is necessarily a mystical adventure, but brought within the range of every mind by its material and practical purpose. And here Miss Johnston's approach to a new historical method quite fully succeeds, so that all readers feel its success. Throughout the awesome passage she stands on the deck with Columbus in the person of Jayme de Marchena. He narrates the voyage, a Jew who has been banished from Spain under the general decrees of exile for all Jews. Miss Johnston makes him a man of philosophical mind, a kind of obscure—and wholly fictitious—Spinoza whose thoughts are a constant commentary on events after the departure from Palos. Thus, without distorting history or creating an imaginary portrait of the great discoverer, Miss Johnston gives us a crucial occurrence in human affairs in a manner that neither history nor biography can command. "Again what we have is the vision of one standing on a hilltop, alone and yet not alone—of one who is at the same instant standing in the night watches on the deck of a

caravel and listening to the cry from the man on lookout."

VI

Now disregarding all implications and overtones—and they are plentiful and delicate—one may, naturally, read the later Mary Johnston for her story. "Foes," "Michael Forth," and "1492" have been more or less indicated. "Sweet Rocket" (1920) is only for those who take pleasure in the transcendental dialectic (in Kantian phrase) of "Michael Forth." The others:

"Silver Cross" (1922) is set in the England of Henry VII., a tale of rival religious establishments, full of the rich sound of ecclesiastical trumpets, the greenness of an elder England.

"Croatan" (1923) skillfully employs the legend of the first white child born in Virginia, Virginia Dare, and the legend of Raleigh's lost colony of Roanoke. It is the story of three young people growing up together in the forest—English girl, Spanish boy, Indian youth.

"The Slave Ship" (1924) tells of David Scott, a prisoner after the battle of Culloden, sold into slavery on the American plantations. The cruelty he endures hardens his conscience, so that when he escapes he goes without much hesitation or scruple into a slave ship and then into slave trading. His career in this traffic finally brings him to an understanding of its wickedness.

"The Great Valley" (1926) is the biography of a Scottish family. Their adventures as pioneers in the Shenandoah Valley are the substance of the book. The closing chapters tell of Elizabeth Selkirk's flight through the wilderness with her daughter, from an Indian village to her home in the Great Valley. Henry Seidel Canby is quite within bounds when he calls this close "one of the finest narratives of Indian warfare and Indian captivity yet written."

"The Exile" (1927) is a leap into the future. After another war, a great country has come under the rule of a dictator. Richard Kaye, having with others resisted the government, is exiled to Eldorado Island, a remote spot used occasionally down the centuries for such punishments. There are legends of these exiles and one at least, Rainbird, still walks. It is the ancient small house that was Rainbird's that is set aside for Kaye. For a year he lives on the island, gradually conscious that he has been there before, and that others were there with him those three centuries earlier when the *Goodly Token* was wrecked upon Eldorado reef. At the end of the story Kaye is recalled to work with other thinkers and doers in a changed world—no temporary cessation of war but a new era.

VII

"A woman whose proper company in American literature is Emily Dickinson, Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman and Melville." We have had no greater historical novelist. In her other aspect no one can tell her final importance. But of the importance no one, any longer, is in doubt.

Books by Mary Johnston

*** Of first consequence
** Of next consequence
* Third in consequence

1898. Prisoners of Hope. *Houghton Mifflin.* In England: The Old Dominion.
1900. * To Have and To Hold. *Houghton Mifflin.* In England: By Order of the Company.
1902. Audrey. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1904. Sir Mortimer. *Harper.*
1907. The Goddess of Reason. Poetic drama. *Houghton Mifflin.*

1908. ** Lewis Rand. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1911. *** The Long Roll. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1912. *** Cease Firing. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1913. Hagar. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1914. The Witch. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1915. The Fortunes of Garin. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1917. The Wanderers. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1918. * Foes. *Harper.* In England: The Laird of Glenfernie.
1918. Pioneers of the Old South, in the series of fifty volumes called The Chronicles of America. *Yale University Press.*
1919. *** Michael Forth. *Harper.* Republished 1926. *Little, Brown.*
1920. Sweet Rocket. *Harper.*
1922. * Silver Cross. *Little, Brown.*
1922. *** 1492. *Little, Brown.* In England: Admiral of the Ocean-Sea.
1923. * Croatan. *Little, Brown.*
1924. * The Slave Ship. *Little, Brown.*
1926. ** The Great Valley. *Little, Brown.*
1927. The Exile. *Little, Brown.*

Sources on Mary Johnston

"Cargoes for Crusoes," by Grant Overton. (Appleton: Doran: Little, Brown: 1924.) Chapter 24.

"The Literary Spotlight," edited by John Farrar. (Doran: 1924.) Chapter on Mary Johnston.

"Mary Johnston: America's Foremost Historical Novelist." Circular published 1926 by Little, Brown & Company, Boston. Reprints part of the chapter on Miss Johnston in "Cargoes for Crusoes," by Grant Overton.

SOPHIE KERR

Sophie Kerr (Mrs. Underwood) has refused for several years to publish a piece of her long fiction in book form, taking the intelligent position that what makes a very good magazine serial may easily be an indifferent novel. But no one who remembers "Painted Meadows" (1920) will be entirely happy over her absence from the novel lists. Perhaps the appearance of a collection of stories, "Confetti" (1927), her first book in five years, presages better news.

Sophie Kerr was born in Denton, Maryland, in 1880, the daughter of Jonathan Williams Kerr and Amanda Catherine Sisk Kerr. She was graduated from Hood College, Maryland, and studied at the University of Vermont for a year. She was a newspaperwoman in Pittsburgh and then, for ten years, was on the staff of *Woman's Home Companion,* becoming managing editor.

Her first four books seem ephemeral beside "Painted Meadows," in which she created a whole Maryland village and reproduced throughout the charm of that countryside.

POSTSCRIPT: Word comes that a novel by Sophie Kerr will be published in 1928; and expectation is particularly stirred by the promise that it is a Maryland story.

Books by Sophie Kerr

1916. Love at Large. *Harper.*
1917. The Blue Envelope. *Doubleday.*
1918. The Golden Block. *Doubleday.*
1919. The See-Saw. *Doubleday.*
1920. Painted Meadows. *Doran.*
1922. One Thing Is Certain. *Doran.*
1927. Confetti. *Doran.*

HELEN R. MARTIN

A PASSION for social justice is dangerous equipment for a novelist. Even so good an artist as John Galsworthy has suffered its betrayals. Helen R. Martin, whose reputation was gained by stories of the Pennsylvania Dutch, has for some time been writing novels which have all the flavor of tracts.

Helen (Reimensnyder) Martin was born in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in 1868, the daughter of the Rev. Cornelius Reimensnyder and Henrietta Thurman Reimensnyder. Mr. Reimensnyder had come from Germany to an American pastorate and the daughter was brought up among people of the Mennonite sect. She studied at Swarthmore and Radcliffe Colleges and was married to Frederic C. Martin in 1889. Her home is in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

The Pennsylvania Dutch farmer is not a person of endearing traits and Mrs. Martin often wrote of him unsympathetically. Whether her people are caricatures, as has been charged, is not easy to settle. Elsie Singmaster has also written many stories of the same people but apparently no similar indictment has been brought against her.

In her novel, "Sylvia of the Minute" (1927), Mrs. Martin has told the tale of a masquerade. The little Pennsylvania Dutch girl turns out to be somebody quite else. The explanation is all mixed up with Hollywood and the discomfiture of Mr. St. Croix Creighton, who likes pretty girls but is full of the social snobbery of the newly rich. Mrs. Martin's well-known ideas about industry and society occur. The book thus combines pastime with improvement.

Books by Helen R. Martin

Elusive Hildegarde.
Her Husband's Purse.
His Courtship.
Warren Hyde.
1904. Tillie, a Mennonite Maid. *Century.*
1905. Sabina, a Story of the Amish. *Century.*
1907. The Betrothal of Elypholate and Other Tales of the Pennsylvania Dutch. *Century.*
1908. The Revolt of Anne Royle.
1910. The Crossways.
1911. When Half-Gods Go.
1912. The Fighting Doctor.
1913. The Parasite.
1914. Barnabetta. Dramatized as "Erstwhile Susan" and acted by Minnie Maddern Fiske. *Century.*
1915. Martha of the Mennonite Country.
1915. For a Mess of Pottage.
1917. Those Fitzenbergers. *Doubleday.*
1918. Gertie Swartz: Fanatic or Christian? *Doubleday.*
1918. Maggie of Virginsburg.
1919. The Schoolmaster of Hessville.
1921. The Marriage of Susan.
1922. The Church on the Avenue. *Dodd, Mead.*
1924. The Snob. *Dodd, Mead.*
1925. Challenged. *Dodd, Mead.*
1926. Ye That Judge. *Dodd, Mead.*
1927. Sylvia of the Minute. *Dodd, Mead.*
1928. The Lie. *Dodd, Mead.*

ELEANOR MERCEIN (MRS. KELLY)

PUBLICATION of "Basquerie" (1927) brings Eleanor Mercein Kelly to the attention of book readers more forcibly than anything of hers since "Kildares of Storm" (1916). She is an excellent story-teller with a good sense of drama, some unusual and well-studied backgrounds, and an ability to portray extremely sophisticated people and simple peasants with equal skill. The sense that her work must be carefully watched in the next few years is strong.

She was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 1880, the daughter of Thomas Royce Mercein and Lucy Schley Mercein. She was graduated from the Georgetown Convent of the Visitation, Washington, D. C., in 1898 and was married to Robert Morrow Kelly, Jr., of Louisville, Kentucky, in 1901. Mr. Kelly died in 1926. Mrs. Kelly's home is in Louisville.

BOOKS BY ELEANOR MERCEIN KELLY

1913. TOYA THE UNLIKE. *Small, Maynard.*
1916. KILDARES OF STORM. *Century.*
1918. WHY JOAN? *Century.*
1925. THE MANSION HOUSE. *Century.*
1927. BASQUERIE. "By Eleanor Mercein (Mrs. Kelly)." *Harper.*

ALICE DUER MILLER

ONLY in one book, the thoughtful re-reader concludes, has Alice Duer Miller done herself justice. "Manslaughter" (1921) had a largeness of a sort that her chosen material generally denies her. "The Happiest Time of Their Lives" (1918), one of the author's favorites, is also of bigger proportions than most of her work. But aren't we, after all, somewhat unreasonable? There is more wit, more perspicacious treatment of well-known human nature, in one of Mrs. Miller's novelettes than in most writers' full-length novels. And she has ideas—"The Charm School" (1919), for a capital instance. (It is true she says the idea was her husband's. Mr. Miller believed quite seriously that men should educate women. But that is one thing; the finished story, another.)

Alice Duer Miller was born in New York in 1874, the daughter of James G. K. Duer and Elizabeth Meads Duer. She was graduated from Barnard College, the feminine section of Columbia University, in 1899. She had specialized in mathematics, which, even now, she likes best of anything; and after graduation she applied for the position of mathematics teacher in a conspicuous private school. The school head listened in silence and when he spoke it was to discuss other things. Some months later he notified her of her appointment; but meanwhile she had fallen in love, been married three weeks, and was returning from a honeymoon to take ship for Central America.

She was married, in 1899, to Henry Wise Miller, of New York, now in Wall Street but then speculating in Costa Rica real estate. "He had a tip," says Harvey O'Higgins, "on the location of the Nicaraguan canal, and

had bought a coffee plantation that lay in the path of the coming land boom." The story continues:

It never came. The canal was built farther north, in what is now called Panama, and he and his wife returned to New York, penniless and with an infant son who had been born amid the venomous hardships of bungalow life in a Costa Rican jungle. . . . Our heroine . . . went back to school-teaching in New York. Her husband determined to enter Wall Street and he got in as a telephone boy. She wrote fiction. . . . She wrote fiction in the intervals of teaching school, keeping house, mothering her child, and selling coffee at night to add to the family income. . . .

She wrote fiction and she sold it. She had to sell it. She had to write it so that it would sell. She learned her craft as well as her art; and much of her work was mere potboiling, but more of it was what the bootlegger calls the pure McCoy. Her first novel, "The Modern Obstacle" (1903) can still be read with gusto. Its sentence sounds like a cross between Jane Austen and Henry James, and its plot would adorn a DeMille movie, but its characters are real, its drama is authentic, and it makes the sort of direct attack on life which Alice Duer Miller makes, even at her most popular.[1]

For short stories and serial rights, magazines now pay Mrs. Miller in the high range of prices. But she does much more than write. "She can manage a household, a dinner, a costume, a servant, a social appearance, or any other item of reality in the smarter circles of New York life as efficiently as she can participate in a meeting of the trustees of Barnard, preside over a luncheon of the Authors' League, conduct a witty newspaper column, make a speech to an open-air meeting or put across on the readers of the *Saturday Evening Post* a story that is

[1] "A Lady Who Writes," by Harvey O'Higgins, in the *New Yorker* for February 19, 1927.

a poisonous satire of some of their most sacred cows. . . . She would as soon bore a reader as a dinner guest. Whatever she has to say, she says entertainingly. She conceals the problems of her art as a good hostess conceals her servant problem. She sits down to her reader with a smile and charms him in her first paragraph." Mr. O'Higgins puts it to perfection.

II

"The Modern Obstacle" was followed by "Calderon's Prisoner" (1904), which has a Central American hero. Constance Binney was featured in the motion picture made from the story. Many readers will recall "Come Out of the Kitchen" (1916), made into an agreeable play. "Ladies Must Live" (1917) contains some of Mrs. Miller's best social satire:

Mrs. Ussher . . . turned toward hidden social availability very much as the douser's hazel wand turns toward the hidden spring. . . . She was unaware of her own powers, and really supposed that her sudden and usually ephemeral friendships were based on mutual attraction. . . . During the short period of their existence, Mrs. Ussher gave to these friendships the utmost loyalty and devotion. She agonized over the financial, domestic and romantic troubles of her friends; she sat up till the small hours, talking to them like a schoolgirl; during the height of their careers she organized plots for their assistance; and even when their stars were plainly on the decline, she would often ask them to lunch, if she happened to be alone.

Many people, we know, are prone to make friends with the rich and great. Mrs. Ussher's genius consisted in having made friends with them before they were either.

Nancy Almar's husband says to her:

"I hope you'll explain to them why I could not come."
"You mean that I would not have gone if you had?"

"No," he said, "that I'm called South on business."

"I sha'n't tell them that, but I'll tell them you say so, if you like."

She was as good as her word. She usually was.

"Would any one like to hear Roland's explanation of why he is not with us?"

"Had it anything to do with his not being asked?" said a pale young man; and as soon as he had spoken he glanced hastily round the circle to ascertain how his remark had succeeded.

So far as Mrs. Almar was concerned it had not succeeded at all, in fact, though he did not know it, nothing he said would ever succeed with her again, although a week before she had hung upon his every word. He had been a new discovery, something unknown and bohemian, but alas, a day or two before, she had observed that underlying his socialistic theories was an aching desire for social recognition. He liked to tell his bejeweled hostesses about his friends the car-drivers; but, oh, twenty times more, he would have liked to tell the car-drivers about his friends the bejeweled hostesses. For this reason Mrs. Almar despised him, and where she despised she made no secret of the fact.

"Not asked, Mr. Wickham!" she said. "I assume my husband is asked wherever I am," and then turning to Laura Ussher she added with a faint smile: "One's husband is always asked, isn't he?"

"Certainly, as long as you never allow him to come," said another speaker.

Of "The Happiest Time of Their Lives" (1918), more serious than much of her work, Mrs. Miller has said:

"I was trying to put a whole family on the canvas, to show the intimate interweaving of their various lives, to show things going on in the lives of the grandfather, mother and daughter of which they themselves were quite unaware. Although apparently devoted to each

other and greatly interested in each other's views and affairs, they continually underestimated the values of each other's hearts."

"The Charm School" (1919) was dramatized and became as popular in the theater as in the book. "The Beauty and the Bolshevist" (1920) is one of the few pieces of fiction which show the capacity to take its politics lightly. Then came "Manslaughter" (1921).

There were several distinctive things about this story. Mrs. Miller sent her heroine, a homicidal young motorist, to jail. Any one who reads more than two novels a year will understand how drastic a course this is for a novelist to take. If one may speak dispassionately, this simple logic of plotting had more tonic moral value than twenty thousand editorial articles in twenty thousand American newspapers demanding, with futile rhetoric, jail sentences for motorists who kill people. Of equal force was the fact that the young lady was rich as well as reckless. Behind the action of the novel lay implications of social justice, moral order, law enforcement, equality before the law for rich and poor, and a few other considerations which have otherwise comparatively little reality for us, however much solicitude we feel for them in theory.

But all this lay in the background. The foreground throughout was alive with a thrilling story. The love interest was integrated with the main action in such a way as to give to both the greatest possible significance. Since the novel appeared serially in the *Saturday Evening Post,* was a best-seller in book form, and went all over the country as a motion picture, an outline seems superfluous. But for the benefit of any who may be unfamiliar, it is sufficient to say that Lydia Thorne is young, beautiful, rich, and of an unchallengeable position in New York society. She has always had her own way until she encounters Daniel O'Bannon, a young district

attorney. When Lydia kills with her car, O'Bannon prosecutes for manslaughter and secures a conviction. This, in a sense, is only the beginning to the novel; the real situation lies beyond.

"The Priceless Pearl" (1923) is much lighter. Pearl Leavitt is too good-looking to hold jobs in offices. Having lost her fourth in ten months, solely on the ground that she is a disturbing influence, and feeling the necessity to eat, she resorts to an innocent impersonation.

"Are Parents People?" (1924) gives the history of Lita Hazlitt's efforts to manage her divorced parents diplomatically while carrying on her own private love affair.

"The Reluctant Duchess" (1925), though all entertainment, has a good deal of substance. Jacqueline was not altogether reluctant about marrying the Duke of Dormier; but when she learned that Dormier had come over deliberately to marry her, and that her parents, instead of being won over to the romance, as she had thought, had actually planned the alliance, why, she never doubted for a moment that she must put a stop to a marriage of that sort. This situation is pushed to its logical extreme and all ends very pleasantly; nevertheless the book "contains enough observation of Anglo-American marriages to make an 'international' novel" and at one moment or another Mrs. Miller "puts into it the unpleasant truth about the American millionaire who buys a title for his daughter, the ambitious wife who incites him to it, the girl who is sold and the lord who is bought."

Mrs. Miller has always admired "Macbeth" as "a magnificent human story, its psychology absolutely built upon reality." Her novel, "Instruments of Darkness" (1926) is nothing but Macbeth brought down to date. "I felt

impelled," she says, "to try to show people what it meant to-day." And Alice Lawton develops the parallel:

If you wish to get the fullest pleasure from "Instruments of Darkness," get out your Shakespeare and reread "Macbeth," if your memory needs refreshing. Then turn to Mrs. Miller's story and see how faithfully she has paralleled the tragedy. Azra, the clairvoyant; Duncan, the rich old man in his Long Island castle; Bethson and Banks, the young, struggling firm of stockbrokers; Bethson being the nephew of Duncan and Banks the former's cousin; Lila, Bethson's ambitious, beautiful wife; Duffield, Duncan's lawyer; the inimical Cawder, and ten-year-old Floyd, Banks's motherless boy, are perfect counterparts of Shakespeare's characters.

III

One still craves for her the subject with widest implications. "Instruments of Darkness" is the first book since "Manslaughter" which seems worthy of her powers. She could do the "Les Miserables" of worldly society. Perhaps she will.

Books by Alice Duer Miller

1903. The Modern Obstacle. *Century.*
1904. Calderon's Prisoner. *Century.*
1909. Less Than Kin. *Century.*
1910. Blue Arch. *Century.*
1915. Are Women People? *Century.*
1916. Come Out of the Kitchen. *Century.*
1917. Ladies Must Live. *Century.*
1918. The Happiest Time of Their Lives. *Century.*
1918. Wings in the Night. Poems. *Century.*
1919. The Charm School. *Harper.*
1920. The Beauty and the Bolshevist. *Harper.*
1921. Manslaughter. *Dodd, Mead.*
1923. The Priceless Pearl. *Dodd, Mead.*
1924. Are Parents People? *Dodd, Mead.*

1925. The Reluctant Duchess. *Dodd, Mead.*
1926. Instruments of Darkness. *Dodd, Mead.*
1928. Welcome Home.

Sources on Alice Duer Miller

"A Lady Who Writes," by Harvey O'Higgins in the *New Yorker* for February 19, 1927.

"Alice Duer Miller's Dual Allegiance," by Alice Lawton, on first page, book section, of the Boston *Evening Transcript* for July 30, 1927.

"Alice Duer Miller." Anonymous. *Saturday Evening Post* of August 16, 1919. Under general heading "Who's Who and Why."

LOIS SEYSTER MONTROSS

A WOMAN who has never written a novel would seem to lack the essential qualification for inclusion in a book on American women novelists. There is, however, in the instance of Mrs. Montross, ground for hope. "I am probably the only woman writer of thirty in America who has not done one," she says, not too seriously. Just the right age to begin.

A good deal of her work has been in collaboration with her husband, Lynn Montross. Both are of the Middle West by birth. Lois Montross was born in Kempton, Illinois, and was graduated from the University of Illinois in 1919. It was while working in a magazine office in Chicago that she first met Lynn Montross, of Iowa. They were twenty-five and twenty-four and their daughter was about a year old when they produced together a book of short, realistic episodes of present-day coeducational college life. "Town and Gown" (1923) contained some admirable writing, though this was not always kept in sight in the fuss the book created on mid-Western campuses.

There was a year or two in New York. Mrs. Montross published a book of poems and began to do those short stories which have been appearing for the last few years in the magazines. In 1925 Mr. and Mrs. Montross settled in Woodstock, Vermont—it is not an "artists' colony"—and have made their home there since, migrating winters.

Three books by the Montrosses appeared in a recent year. "Among Those Present" (Doran: 1926) was a book of tales concerning "unimportant" people, inarticu-

late, and living by curious illusions. "Fraternity Row" (Doran: 1926) was a collection of short episodes about college life, a kind of continuation of "Town and Gown," and centering around Andy Protheroe, a perpetual senior at the State University. The third and most recent book is "The Talk of the Town" (Harper: 1926) which relates the invasion of bohemian New York by an elocutionist from Bloomington, Illinois.

HONORÉ WILLSIE MORROW

VERY few writers undergo more of an ordeal than fell to Honoré Willsie Morrow. It took her hard years in New York to get a living by writing and a much longer time to find her proper province of work.

She was born in Ottumwa, Iowa, the daughter of William Dunbar McCue and Lilly Bryant Head McCue, of New England ancestry. Her first name commemorates a bit of French blood and its form, without the double "e" is due to its being a surname.

Mrs. Morrow was graduated from the University of Wisconsin and then spent two years in the Arizona desert. There she wrote and rewrote a first novel which was to remain unpublished for some time.

She sold a short story to one of the lesser magazines and advanced on New York. The editor offered to buy more stories of the same sort but they were not a kind of thing she wanted to do. Theodore Dreiser, then an editor, offered her an office job and made her decide on the spot. She sat across from him and thought hard, but finally she said no and went back to the mean room in a rather disreputable neighborhood. That first year she made $500. Once, driven to answering an advertisement for a governess, she walked miles to save the nickel carfare, and miles back to get her things. She found a check for $75 waiting and she did not take the job.

Having proved she didn't have to, she took an editorial job, later becoming editor of *Delineator* (1914-19). A fellow editor looking for a serial spoke of a manuscript he had read the year before. He regretted not having noted the author's name and address. "If you want that

story," said Mrs. Morrow, "it is in a packing box under my bed." He did, and so did a book publisher. "The Heart of the Desert" (1913) became the first of a series of Western novels which gained marked popularity.

The immediate money struggle was over. Mrs. Morrow was now in the condition of her pioneer ancestors after they had averted the Indian peril and faced only a few comparatively small problems—such as what they could make the soil grow.

It took her a dozen years to discover her real crop. All the while she was writing Western stories she knew something was wrong, without knowing what. To-day she speaks of those earlier romances with savage impatience.

She became the wife of William Morrow, the New York publisher. She groped her way into the historical background of the Western country. Then she read the diary of Narcissa Whitman and saw before her a bigger novel than she had ever done. Buckling down to the severer tasks of historical research, she found that the stuff fired her imagination as nothing but the Western landscape had ever done before.

She mastered a technique for the historical novel and produced, in "We Must March" (1925), an original and stirring book. When she reached the end of the work she saw that it was the beginning of a new career. She wrote "On to Oregon!" (1926) and followed it with her novel of Lincoln, "Forever Free" (1927).

Simple and direct in manner, her voice takes on warmth and color as she talks of Whitman and Oregon, Sam Houston and Texas, Lincoln, Bronson Alcott of Brook Farm, and Fray Francisco Garces, the priest-explorer of the Southwest. These are human characters she can make convincingly alive. She has found her company and is equipped to do her best work.

Books by Honoré Willsie Morrow

Earlier books signed Honoré Willsie.

1913. The Heart of the Desert. *Stokes.*
1915. Still Jim. *Stokes.*
1916. Lydia of the Pines. *Stokes.*
1917. Benefits Forgot. Episode in Lincoln's life. *Stokes.*
1919. The Forbidden Trail. *Stokes.*
1920. The Enchanted Canyon. *Stokes.*
1922. Judith of the Godless Valley. *Stokes.*
1923. The Exile of the Lariat. *Stokes.*
1924. The Devonshers. *Stokes.*
1925. We Must March. *Morrow.*
1926. On to Oregon! *Morrow.*
1927. Forever Free. *Morrow.*
1927. The Father of Little Women. Biography of Bronson Alcott. *Little, Brown.*

FRANCES NEWMAN

This chapter is based upon a first novel, together with certain information about a second which may be published about the time of the appearance of this book. There is also available information about the author and her purposes. The indications are for the reader's judgment.

"The Hard-Boiled Virgin" was the first novel, and it was one of those adventures to which only the reader of distinctly literary tastes and varieties of literary experience could safely commit himself. The title probably misled a good many persons, as did undoubtedly the title of John Erskine's "The Private Life of Helen of Troy." But in the case of "The Hard-Boiled Virgin" the adventurousness referred to was due to the style in which it was written, hardly to the subject-matter. For Frances Newman's novel had not a line of conversation. There were no scenes, such as fiction writers ordinarily construct. Everything was narrative—and rather remotely narrated, the heroine always being spoken of as Katharine Faraday, never simply "she." The first feeling of the book was therefore undramatic.

Yet the story contained plenty of drama, constricted, constrained, inhibited, repressed and backed into corners; calmed but not quelled by an eye of stern intelligence and anxious sophistication—some of it drama in the Henry James sense, and a little of it drama in a sense understood almost equally well by Florenz Ziegfeld and Sherwood Anderson. What was the story?

Katharine Faraday came of one of the best Southern families, resident in Atlanta. She was a sixth child and

evidently a lonely child. She read precociously, and as time went on found her freesia complexion and black hair and flat-chestedness the usual poor offset to the possession of brains. In the highly feminized atmosphere of good Southern families (1890-1910) she acquired and managed readily enough all the outward rattle of a complicated social battle in which, she understood, she was licked before she started.

She first attracted a married man whose specialty was Egypt and who was happy to find an intelligently listening ear. He thrilled her, and so did a West Point cadet, but she didn't get kissed until she met an army captain. His impulsiveness was against the social code in which she had been brought up, and she acted outraged virtue too convincingly, so that even a tentative letter to him afterward brought no reply.

There now appeared on the scene one Neal Lumpkin, whose slow-moving courtship allowed an interlude in which Katharine was again kissed by a married man. Then came "the evening when Neal Lumpkin finally became damp around his near-sighted eyes and then began to breathe so noticeably that Katharine Faraday acquired a permanent distaste for breathing." With Lumpkin washed out, she met Chauncey Brewster, a Ph.D. and a lecturer on the drama and everything.

When he told her about his forefather, who had assisted at the hanging of Major André and whose portrait was still in Independence Hall, she was sure his genealogical confidences must mean that he was pleased with the georgette iris on her new Crocker hat, although she did not suppose he knew they were on a Crocker hat.

Something began to go wrong with their evenings, so Katharine went to Italy. On the way home she met Murray Whiting and Baron Lothar Falkenhayn. It is

certain that she loved David Hofmann until that letter telling about the birth of his second child.

She soon became afraid to have a man so much as admire her writing, and, at last, in Dresden, in the company of the young playwright, Alden Ames, she fulfilled certain technical requirements with a feeling more remote than that conferred by a kiss. She returned to America to become the author of a reasonably successful play and to become confirmed in the conviction that she was virginal, quite hopelessly so.

Many questions are raised by the literary method. Almost everybody found the first hundred pages most difficult reading. It takes time to become accustomed to a new style, and for long it seems as if Miss Newman's sentences had all to begin with "but," "when" and "since." They are frequently long sentences in which are woven details that seem irritatingly incongruous and irrelevant, however clever in themselves. At or about one-third the way through, the reader either quits or finds himself beginning to enjoy the stuff. One defect may be noted: From beginning to end Katharine Faraday is presented in terms of Miss Newman. Even though Katharine was a precocious child she is not helped by so recondite a presentation. The grown-up Katharine goes much more smoothly and plausibly. Yet to the very end the reader is likely to stumble over narrative sentences in which affirmatives are always stated by the use of a double negative—a negative by the use of three negatives.

The question of taste arises once or twice. Readers need not be squeamish to prefer that catamenia be taken for granted or that Christianity be not termed a sadist's religion. But there are delicious feminine touches. One, already quoted, concerns the Crocker hat. Two more may be recalled. When Katharine Faraday was a very little girl the afternoons on which her mother and older

sisters were out "had usually been occupied by baths surreptitiously shared with Alex Faraday and enlivened by soap bubbles and by slides down the angular end of the tub—bath approved by a sympathetic mammy on the condition that Alex and Katharine Faraday would keep their backs turned toward each other." Katharine was a great girl for baths, and later, on the arrival of an important letter, she drew an especially hot bath, immersed herself, and read the letter nine times.

She felt most uncharitably toward her sister, Eleanor, who had been "untactfully unkind" after the break with the army captain.

She walked down Peachtree street, while she was hoping that Eleanor Faraday's baby would give her at least three extremely painful days and nights when it gave up defying matrimonial and medical calculations and consented to be born, and while she was hoping that it would be a girl and that it would grow up extremely ugly and that Eleanor Faraday would rise from her Sheraton bed with that loose-haired milky look which usually identified young mothers as certainly as the cut of their navy blue taffeta frocks.

Into the tissue of the story are inserted all sorts of delightful scratches at writers and writings, from the Victorian day to the present. This, combined with the method, makes the book peculiarly a novelists' novel. The professional writer will read it with an eye to any possible gains for him in Miss Newman's very original performance.

II

Frances Newman was born in Atlanta, at the end of a family of six children, and a fourth daughter. Her father had been a captain in the Confederate cavalry; when Frances was born he was United States Judge for the

northern district of Georgia. His father had been a soldier in the Mexican War. Frances Newman's mother's father was also a judge and the men of that family seem to have been lawyers and soldiers. Miss Newman has suggested that "all those lawyers have left a good deal of their quality in my writing." Her ancestry was Scotch and English.

She went to schools in Atlanta, Washington and New York, but not to college. Her home has always been Atlanta but she has been in New York and Europe a good deal, and most of the time since 1922.

She went to work in the Atlanta Library because she liked books; "it never occurred to me that I could write one." While in charge of the lending department she began to write little notices of books, solely to attract readers to the library. These gradually grew into formal reviews, signed with her name, and attracted the attention of James Branch Cabell, H. L. Mencken, and the publisher, B. W. Huebsch. She did some things for the *Reviewer,* a Richmond literary magazine. She was completely under the influence of modern English writers.

Her father and mother had died. She decided to go to France and see if she could not get away from the English influence. In Paris she went to lectures at the Sorbonne, on the eighteenth century chiefly. Then she met a charming woman with whom she read eighteenth century French books, Voltaire, Diderot and the rest. She neither read nor wrote English for six months. Coming home, she wrote some feature newspaper stories, with the idea of practice in writing more simply.

Talking with the writer, Paul Morand, in Paris, she had happened to express an idea which now germinated, becoming her first book, "The Short Story's Mutations" (1924). To show those mutations the book has imbedded in it stories from all ages. While translating the

French examples, Miss Newman had the idea for a story, and "Rachel and Her Children" [1] was actually the first story she had ever written. It won the O. Henry Prize as the best story of its year under 3,000 words. Miss Newman has since come to consider it very bad.

Mr. Huebsch had listed "The Short Story's Mutations" in his publishing announcements when only two chapters were done. Horace Liveright, of Boni & Liveright, saw the first three pages of "The Hard-Boiled Virgin" and made a contract on the spot. The novel was finished at the MacDowell Colony at Peterboro, New Hampshire. Miss Newman went abroad again, returning to Peterboro to begin her second novel.

"Dead Lovers Are Faithful Lovers," as the second novel is called while these lines are being written, will probably be thought more generally interesting than "The Hard-Boiled Virgin." The prose is smoother and clearer. The first half is in the mind of a young wife who is very much in love with her husband. The story then modulates into the mind of a girl he falls in love with eleven years after his marriage. At the end, when he is just dead, there is a modulation back into the mind of the wife—safely and triumphantly and serenely widowed. The book is in episodes, mostly quite short, like Miss Newman's first novel. But it has a little conversation, though only the conversation that seems to the author significant.

III

The form of Frances Newman's fiction is the outcome of two fixed ideas: That a novel is unlikely to be really good unless it is concerned with a life the author knows completely, and, second, that modern American life is as unsuited to literature as modern trousers are to sculpture. These two ideas conflict, and have forced Miss Newman

[1] In the *American Mercury* for May, 1924.

to work out a manner of stylizing life, so to speak. Although the subject could hardly be more different, James Branch Cabell thinks the form of "The Hard-Boiled Virgin" is noticeably related to that of Walter Pater's "Marius the Epicurean." Miss Newman had never thought of this until Mr. Cabell suggested it. Then she recalled that she had read "Marius" a good deal ten years earlier.

As relating to the idea that a novel must present a life the author knows completely, it is worth noting that Isabel Ramsay, in the second half of "Dead Lovers Are Faithful Lovers," is a librarian. She is probably the first real librarian in fiction. Carol Kennicott, in Sinclair Lewis's "Main Street," and the heroine of Carl Van Vechten's "Nigger Heaven" are called librarians, but in each case there was only the author's statement to suggest it. Margaret Widdemer just suggested the idea of a library in "The Rose-Garden Husband." But Miss Newman is trying to show the library's effect on librarians. She was one about ten years—at the Florida State College for Women, at the Carnegie Library of Atlanta, and as head librarian at the Georgia School of Technology.

One detail: When Miss Newman aims at simplifying her prose she doesn't mean short sentences, only clear sentences; sentences, as she says, "not cluttered up by reminiscences of other writers. I write long sentences because I like inferences, not flat-footed declarations, and of course that requires a protasis and an apodosis."

BOOKS BY FRANCES NEWMAN

1924. THE SHORT STORY'S MUTATIONS. *Huebsch. Viking. Press.*
1926. THE HARD-BOILED VIRGIN. Novel. *Liveright.*
1928. DEAD LOVERS ARE FAITHFUL LOVERS. Novel. *Liveright.*

Sources on Frances Newman

"The Advancing South," by Edwin Mims.
Article by Antrim Crawford in *The Midlander*, April or May, 1927.

KATHLEEN NORRIS

THE nature of Kathleen Norris's success, and even the measure of it, has obscured her qualities from the vision of critics. No living American writer enjoys a greater popularity nor earns by writing larger sums of money. None, with a serial publication, can more rapidly or sizably increase the circulation of a magazine. At forty-seven, she holds all records, including that for extended influence. Her first book, a novelette, appeared in 1911, and her best book—so far—was not published until eleven years later. Meantime, noting a book a year, the literary appraisers, with a facility that sometimes leads them into disaster, had decided that here was "just another popular novelist" and dismissed her accordingly. The advent of "Certain People of Importance" found them unprepared.

Yet years before the man esteemed in his day as the dean of American letters and whose critical word is still not without its weight, William Dean Howells, had written:

"Mrs. Norris puts the problem, or the fact, or the trait before you by quick, vivid touches of portraiture or action. If she lacks the final touch of Frank Norris's power, she has the compensating gift of a more controlled and concentrated observation. She has the secret of closely adding detail to detail in a triumph of what another California author [1] has called Littleism, but what seems to be nature's way of achieving Largeism."

There are other reasons why Kathleen Norris has failed to get her due from critics and reviewers. First,

[1] Gertrude Atherton.

she is a writer a great many men, and some women, cannot read at all. The majority of women read her in preference to anybody else—and as women are ninety per cent. of the readers of American books and magazines, this is vital. Second, her work is uneven; and while she has been only reasonably long, in terms of years, coming to her full power, in terms of books—one a year or better—it has seemed longer, her unevenness more discouraging. Third, she has none of the recognized marks of literary style, that amber which preserves some very ordinary flies. For a last reason we may guess that even critics are human and hate to backtrack or confess to a mistake.

The first and third of these reasons require explanation.

II

Why cannot a great many men, and some of her own sex, read Mrs. Norris? The answer cannot be given in one sentence.

The differences of men's and women's interests have to an astonishing extent been reconciled in America of to-day; but although men and women are so constantly together and share so many interests, the values of each remain separated. Not only do the values differ, the identifications of experience differ. Take a very simple illustration, a husband and wife attend a party. They may remain together during most of the evening but a week later, asked to recall the event, they relate details very far apart. The discrepancy is not merely that of two pairs of eyes, it is a sexual difference. The woman has really observed, and now remembers, those things that concerned her as a woman—the fit of a dress, the look Mrs. Bard gave her husband when he told about his mother's cooking, John Croyden's prowl to keep beside Cora Mallock and the strained look about his wife's eyes,

the food, the service, the snub administered in a way only women perceive or understand. To few men is it given to look for or detect these things, and of course some women are oblivious to them also. But our lady, and most of her sex, are busy on such occasions and others that are no occasions at all, assembling from the materials at hand the elements of one or more human dramas. To them, as to their remotest ancestors, a man's interest and a man's love is the most important thing in existence unless and until a child to love takes its place. If they are reasonably fortunate and wise, even that place is only a place beside.

The masculine drama has always had other ingredients, but these have value for most women only in relation to the paramount relationship; money and fame may be ends in themselves for men, but seldom are for women. The husband is elated at turning the trick; his wife has the secret and delicious feeling: "He belongs to me." She has her own idea of achievement, and her own achievement. It is much less illusory than the male's. With her practical view of the ends of life, with her daily dramatization of their existence, she creates and sustains that most marvelous of realities, the home; and in ninety-nine instances in every hundred where they have happiness, she is the source—the virtue inheres in her alone.

III

This is a fact that Kathleen Norris knows, none better, and that she can express, few so clearly. Women read her with absorption for that reason; and because in all her stories she provides them with exactly the materials for their daily drama that they constantly assemble and use. Not an item of the minute inventory is lacking. We see in her heroines what another woman would see. In every relation between a man and a woman in her

stories, we get all that a woman would feel about it. Not a feminine accent is missed, not an "i" nor a Swiss left undotted. Her men are often correspondingly weakly drawn. Is it any wonder that a great many men cannot read her, nor those women whose valuations approximate the run of men's? She speaks a language strange to their thoughts, incredible to their ears. But it happens to be nearly the universal language of her sex.

And it is not a literary language, merely a highly literate one. She has never tried to do more than convey in the common vocabulary all that she had to say in phrases that could not be mistaken; in phrases, too, that she confidently felt would communicate most freely her own emotion. She is an emotional writer: so was Dickens. But all good novelists are charged with emotion and literary quarrels are restricted to the methods of its expression. Mrs. Norris is too Irish to be stinting, though partly it is from the aim of clearness and a dramatic enjoyment (Irish, too) that she tends to turn the faucet on full. She is full of sentiment, but the charge of sentimentality can be met with plenty of counter-evidence. There is nothing of the facile optimist about her; she keeps her social theories, which are few and simple, out of her fiction.

Her faultiest quality is in her plots. She sometimes throws probability and plausibility to the winds to achieve an ending. In "Rose of the World" a husband and a wife are killed off within twenty-four hours, or thereabouts, to clear the path for the surviving couple. But sometimes Mrs. Norris uses a scandalous coincidence or far-fetched device and then more than justifies it by the revelation of character which it makes possible—as when, in "Barberry Bush," she has the marriage between Barbara and Barry turn out to have been performed by a bogus minister. Before the reader has time for a re-

sentful "Pshaw!" Mrs. Norris is deep in the disclosure of the poet-husband which only such a situation could bring about.

For her strength—the strength of every master of the novel—is in character. Readers of "The Callahans and the Murphys," her short stories, and "Little Ships" may conclude that it is pretty well limited to Irish character —despite the Jewess in "Little Ships"—but this is not true. "Certain People of Importance" with its generations of Crabtrees and Brewers offers too complete witness otherwise. In this same novel Albert Brewer marries Lola Espinosa—a mere detail in the whole design. Yet in the picture of Lola's life and the condensed history of that marriage Mrs. Norris conveys more of the old California life than another author manages to give us in a whole novel, or series of novels. With a faculty of observation as accurately photographic as Sinclair Lewis's, Mrs. Norris combines a power of selection of feminine detail not seen since the day of Jane Austen, and she avoids completely Mr. Lewis's animus, frustration and rage. Life, she makes us understand, is a complicated, terrible, beautiful and enormously fascinating affair. Out of its everydayness, hiding nothing, as well as out of its spectacular moments, she will make us feel its fascination as we never felt it before.

IV

Kathleen Norris was born in San Francisco in 1880, the daughter of James Alden Thompson and Josephine Moroney Thompson. The father came of a Boston family, though born in Hawaii, and was a bank clerk, and afterward bank manager. On the mother's side, besides Moroneys, there were Hacketts and O'Keefes. The family of eight were very comfortably situated and as one views the reflection of those days in Mrs. Norris's

"Mother" and "Noon," it is difficult to believe that this was not an exceptionally happy family circle. The home was in Mill Valley. Two westerly peninsulas separated by the Golden Gate, like extended arms not quite touching, close off San Francisco Bay from the Pacific Ocean. Mill Valley is on the northerly peninsula, as San Francisco is on the southerly one. Here, among redwood trees and little mountains and within tramping distance of the beaches, the children grew.

Then the blow fell. Kathleen was eighteen or nineteen. She would have had a coming-out party in San Francisco that winter. The mother was stricken with pneumonia and was buried on Thanksgiving eve. Mr. Thompson, dying on his birthday, was buried beside her on Christmas eve. Heavy bills immediately wasted most of the $3,000 legacy which was all the children had.

The oldest, a boy, was twenty. Kathleen was next. Teresa, afterward to become the wife of William Rose Benét, the poet and writer, was not two full years younger than Kathleen. Two of the children were hardly of school age. A five-room flat was taken in San Francisco and in three weeks the oldest was earning $60 a month with an electrical firm. Kathleen went to work in a hardware establishment for half that. Teresa got expenses and $5 in a private kindergarten. With only microscopic additions, and with an invalid aunt to make the household generally seven, the group subsisted for about two years.

The story of those years, so far as one can tell such an experience, is in "Noon." After some more years of lessening hardship Kathleen Thompson was enchanted by a job as a reporter for the San Francisco *Call*. And then she met Charles Gilman Norris, brother of the novelist, Frank Norris. He was working for the magazine, *Sunset*. They were married in the spring of 1909 and came to

New York, where Charles Norris got a job at $25 a week on the *American Magazine*. They were resolved to write, they kept house, they made both ends meet and they were wildly happy.

A newspaper was paying space rates—a few dollars a column—for short stories. Mrs. Norris wrote two. The paper bought both and awarded its $50 prize for the week's best story to one of them. Whereupon her husband dug out a story she had written several years before, re-read it carefully, and out of his professional knowledge announced that it "would sell." He made a long list of possible markets, arranged it alphabetically, and sent the story out. Some twenty-eight or thirty-eight editors—no one remembers the size of the list—sent the story back. This took five months. Mr. Norris began again at the top of the list, with the *Atlantic Monthly*, which took it this time. A copy of the magazine containing "What Happened to Alanna" was shown to Mrs. Norris in the hospital just after the birth of a son, Frank, named for his famous uncle.

From that day Mr. Norris has been his wife's agent. "No written word of mine has ever been placed, edited, sold, contracted for, except through my husband's hands. Nothing is written until it has been discussed and planned with him. I used to say that in justice his name should appear with mine on the title-page of more than one of my books. But this matter he settled once and for all by beginning to write books of his own." Mr. Norris's first novel appeared in 1915; he is widely known for "Salt: The Education of Griffith Adams," "Brass," "Bread," "Pig Iron," and "Zelda Marsh." These books are as unlike his brother's and wife's work as possible. He and Mrs. Norris also differ completely in their methods of work. Mrs. Norris writes rapidly when writing; but a good deal of her working time is spent in mechan-

ical games of solitaire while the scenes and people of her story develop in her mind. Mr. Norris sometimes achieves only three sentences in as many hours' hard work.

The final step to success remains to be recorded. A woman's magazine had offered a prize of $1,000 for the best story, of not more than 3,000 words. Considering the length, the magazine might as well have handed the money to Zona Gale and saved a few thousand heart-aches, but this would have advertised the magazine less. In the end, Miss Gale got it anyway.

Mrs. Norris started a story to enter in the contest. Motherhood had brought back strongly and freshly to mind her own mother. The story ran too long, was laid aside, and another written and submitted. For some reason a little hard to understand, the disappointment of not winning was extreme. But "finally, with a sick and discouraged heart" she went back to the first story. Its eight thousand words elicited from Charles the prophecy: "This will be worth ten times that prize money yet." The story was published in the *American Magazine;* was expanded into a novelette for book publication; and as a book made such an impression on Mr. Bok, editor of the *Ladies' Home Journal,* that he published it serially in that magazine despite its appearance, and already very wide circulation, as a book. No other instance in which a magazine has done this recurs to mind.

Since then, only expanding success.

V

The books that followed "Mother" (1911) can be characterized more or less together. The poor girl brought into the world of the rich and idle, tasting luxuriousness for the first time, subjected to merciless expo-

sure of her social awkwardness, is a favorite theme. Mrs. Norris always communicates the actual thrill of the girl's adventure in wonderland; with her heroine you savor the deliciousness of fine clothes, smart parties, spacious houses. The sensuousness of silks and furs, the *decor* of meals formally served, the crisp accents of sports in a rolling countryside are all "in." But much more is there. The intoxication of young love, of life itself when one is young, is in her pages. She is, of course, under no illusions about these enjoyments, nor puts any upon her readers. She offers them for what they are—and when one is young, or even when one is older and tastes them for the first time, they are very heaven. In thus writing of two worlds she has the advantage of knowing both at first hand, and as well the world between. She has been poor, middle-class, and rich; and she forgets nothing.

Part of the fault of undue contrivance in her plots comes from her liking for these shifts of circumstance. She wants to show how this one, who has experienced nothing but poverty, will behave in the midst of wealth. Conscious that money and the things it buys make such enormous differences to women, she is anxious to show that they do not and cannot make the final difference of happiness. "Undertow" (1917), "Josselyn's Wife" (1918), and "Harriet and the Piper" (1920) are illustrations. "Undertow" deals with two young married spendthrifts. In "Josselyn's Wife" it is the small town girl who stands by her husband through his murder trial, after his rich family deserts him, and in spite of his desertion of her. "Harriet and the Piper" is like one of those knots that disappear with a twitch at the ends of the string, but meanwhile the reader shares in the youth, romance, fashion, fun and perilousness of a girl's great hour.

Later, in "Hildegarde" (1926), Mrs. Norris was to do this story of the poor girl in contact with the rich and do it with a simplicity and sureness of action, an intensity of emotional experience, a wealth of infallible and perfectly selected detail that makes these earlier books seem artless and unsteady. In all her books between "Mother" and "Certain People of Importance" there is makeshift, scaffolding, and more or less of the rubbish of the rapid builder. But the point is that in every one there is also something, be it merely the scenes between mother and daughter, or the delineation of a secondary character, that is extraordinarily good, quite perfect of its kind. And often it is the important thing, the love affair around which such a story naturally moves.

Literary disputes like political disputes have a way of begging the question. The argument about the happy ending is an example. The only actual question about an ending is its convincingness, its real or apparent inevitability, and thus its justness from the reader's point of view. Mrs. Norris sins against this requirement often enough, but she is not a writer who pursues pleasantness at every cost. In "Sisters" (1919) one woman is hopelessly attracted by the other's husband. The victim of this situation takes her sister's husband with her and drives the automobile over a cliff. Mrs. Norris insists on no ethical attitude on the part of the reader, confronting this tragedy. She tells the story. "Martie, the Unconquered" (1917) did not come to an unmitigatedly "happy" ending, and is, perhaps, all things considered, and despite the popularity of "The Heart of Rachael" (1916), the best of her novels between "Mother" and "Certain People of Importance," which we must now consider.

Rupert Hughes, who has once or twice done novels of the same amplitude, outlines the book as well as possible:

" 'Certain People of Importance' is the story of a family that came to California among the earliest. There is a brief summary of the forebears beginning with the eighteenth century. Hannah Pratt is the first of a long gallery of portraits. She lived in 'the little plain-faced house under the magnificent elms behind the forge' at Bridgewater, Connecticut. Then there is Annie Crabtree who moved almost as far west as Chicago and 'made her own soap, her own rough shoes, and her children's shoes; taught her children to read and write, and heated great pails of water and washed them till she forgot the old church bells clanging in the sunny air.'

"Her favorite son was married to a 'blowsy, handsome, noisy girl' whose sister was married to another man 'at the point of a gun.' Her son Reuben did no better. Her husband gambled away the fruit of all their slaving years and blamed the railroad for doing him out of his rights.

"The family kept westering until Reuben Crabtree crossed the prairie in fifty-seven days, and reached San Francisco in 1849. He grew rich with the town, and his daughter May became a belle and 'her tilting hoops sailed triumphantly' through every door on Nob Hill.

"She married Stephen Brewer and taught his children to respect themselves, saying: 'I suppose there is no older or finer family than ours in America.'

"Her mother's negro assistant Carra became 'one of the family servants' and played a strangely dramatic rôle in the family story.

"Travel in Europe and wide acquaintance spread the family fame, and old Reuben Crabtree became one of the picturesque rulers of the city. Relatives from the East came, and sons and daughters had their love stories, their comedies and tragedies in a long crowded procession. The book is, indeed, a boulevard of life with glimpses into innumerable houses and hearts.

"Among all the matters of pride were incessant humiliations, and there is a keen dramatic thrust in the discovery by one of the daughters that her senile old father had actually married the negro woman Carra.

"There are landscapes of beauty, trysts kept, romances begun and ruined by circumstances.

"Throughout, the conversations are marvelously vivid and truthful. Young and old people, maids and wantons, children and grandams, all live and move and have their being.

"We watch them grow with San Francisco and with the United States and with the world."

It is a monumental book, full of veracity, redolent of humanity. Its texture can only be indicated. There is the family waiting for the grandfather to die, not maliciously, but in a sort of humble anxiety for him to have had enough of a good thing. There is the clergyman who seems attracted to one of May's daughters—May has not been too fortunate with her daughters—and who stuns the circle with news that a lady back East has written her "Yes" to his suit. The family recovers slowly from the undreamed-of existence of this woman. The minister marries her; she dies. Again he consorts much with May's daughter; hope revives. Suddenly a widow and scandal burst on the fair prospect. When this storm is over the minister comes round again. And at last he is hooked, amid such a triumph of patient waiting and social whitewashing as only good women are capable of. The book is full of births, each of a fascinating gynecological difference from all the others; and each is invested with the interest and importance which it would naturally assume in the women's eyes. A very feminine book, a surpassingly Jane Austenish book; a prodigious heap of raw material all sorted, placed in perspective, held firmly in a complete and symmetrical scheme in which not one

relevant person or event is skimped or over-emphasized. Among the novels of recent years one finds none by an American comparable; abroad one may pick perhaps only one—"The Matriarch," by G. B. Stern, and its sequel, "A Deputy Was King."

"Hildegarde" (1926), though entirely independent of "Certain People of Importance," may be read as a sequel, since its heroine is the daughter of Nelly Carter and Rudy Sessions, two persons who make an ill-omened marriage in the earlier book.

VI

Since "Certain People of Importance" Mrs. Norris has given us the hardly less ambitious, and equally well-executed "Little Ships" (1925). And while in "Rose of the World" (1924) and "The Black Flemings" (1926) and "The Sea Gull" (1927) we recognize no alteration from the Kathleen Norris of 1912-22, in "Hildegarde" and "Barberry Bush" (1927) there is a depth and a stroke imperceptible before. In 1924 she published "The Callahans and the Murphys," a collection of tales about two Irish-American families whose lives ran together. No one has ever done such families so well.

The Callahans and the Murphys are one stratum; the Cunninghams, in "Little Ships," are another. Mr. Cunningham is a prosperous grocer and the family can afford anything in reason. But in typical Irish fashion, the tie between them and another group, very poor and closely related, is kept close and strong. In the other group are a grandmother, two shiftless uncles, and an exceedingly pretty cousin of the Cunningham children. It is with these children and their cousin that the history is concerned; their childhood, growth, love affairs, marriages and the aftermath of the marriages—a history steeped in maternal pride and vanity, youthful willfulness, sorrow,

catastrophe, family compromises and romantic young love. As in "Certain People of Importance" Mrs. Norris is consistently realistic, putting in both the shame and the glory, the diapers and dreams. In the grandmother of "Little Ships" she has very possibly created the most inimitable of all her characters, a witchy Irish woman full of irrelevant tales and piercing wisdom, an old saint living in the shadow of the gas tanks.

The two worthless uncles ("the boys") are from the life also; but the man Mrs. Norris has most fully and perfectly created so far is the poet, Barry du Spain, in "Barberry Bush" (1927). His perfection will perhaps not be fully apparent except to women who have come in close contact with the type. It is the "genius" type whose sublime selfishness we usually condone when its product enriches the world's art or literature. Barry marries Barbara and takes her to an old California ranch he has inherited. The night of their wedding, after exhausting labor, she gets their meal in a wretched old cabin. An inauspicious vagabond shows up; Barry finds him picturesque and is soon deep in conversation with him. The over-fatigued bride, unable to sit up, steals off to bed, getting an absent "Good night." Overtired, bewildered, humiliated, she lies half-awake hearing the voices go on and on and on. . . . Afterward Barry deserts her and their child, leaving her quite penniless. When finally he reappears it is in the armor of innocence and with his feint of injury that somehow always puts her in the wrong. Has he not undergone travel and hardships in the effort to conquer their fortunes? Could a man do more than he has done to prove his devotion? He loves her; she is his wife; this is their child. And it is true: he does love her. It is simply that he is one of those men who are not fit material for an American husband. His suicide may be challenged as improbable.

The likelihood is rather that, after some further disappearance and interval, he would be found living with another woman, impermanently of course. But it must be remembered that Barry du Spains are a strange and unknown species to the overwhelming majority of readers and that only by some such act of finality could Mrs. Norris carry the conviction of his love for Barbara, which was real.

VII

Mr. and Mrs. Norris live at La Estancia, Saratoga, California. You go down the peninsula, south from San Francisco. Perhaps you leave the train at Palo Alto, home of Stanford University, and motor along the floor of the Santa Clara valley, in a sea of fruit trees. Saratoga is a village at the foot of the Santa Cruz mountains; the car climbs along one wall of a narrow, twisty, deepening canyon; you emerge in a wide dip between two summits. An unpretentious house is set on land for which the blue sky seems no more than a ceiling. These uplands are very green in winter; from May to November, fawn-colored in the flood of sunlight.

Years ago the redwoods were logged off these mountains but here and there a circular arcade of young giants rings the site of a vanished colossus, and makes a green shrine for the mighty dead.

Here in her prime she has rooted herself for the best years that grow the thickest rings.

Books by Kathleen Norris

*** Of first importance
** Of next importance
* Third in importance

1911. ** Mother. *Doubleday.*
1912. The Rich Mrs. Burgoyne. *Doubleday.*
1913. Poor, Dear Margaret Kirby. Short stories. *Doubleday.*

1914. Saturday's Child. *Doubleday.*
1915. The Treasure. *Doubleday.*
1915. The Story of Julia Page. *Doubleday.*
1916. The Heart of Rachael. *Doubleday.*
1917. * Martie, the Unconquered. *Doubleday.*
1917. Undertow. Novelette. *Doubleday.*
1918. Josselyn's Wife. *Doubleday.*
1919. Sisters. *Doubleday.*
1920. Harriet and the Piper. *Doubleday.*
1921. The Beloved Woman. *Doubleday.*
1922. Lucretia Lombard. *Doubleday.*
1922. *** Certain People of Importance. *Doubleday.*
1923. Butterfly. *Doubleday.*
1924. Rose of the World. *Doubleday.*
1924. ** The Callahans and the Murphys. Integrated short stories. *Doubleday.*
1925. Noon: An Autobiographical Sketch. *Doubleday.*
1925. *** Little Ships. *Doubleday.*
1926. The Black Flemings. *Doubleday.*
1926. ** Hildegarde. *Doubleday.*
1927. The Sea Gull. *Doubleday.*
1927. ** Barberry Bush. *Doubleday.*
1927. My Best Girl. *Burt.*

Sources on Kathleen Norris

Her "Noon" is autobiographical.

"Kathleen Norris: An Appreciation," by Rupert Hughes, is a leaflet published by Doubleday, Page & Company.

No adequate, and no just, critical account of her work exists.

MARIE CONWAY OEMLER

A NEW interest forms about Marie Conway Oemler since publication of her novel, "The Holy Lover" (1927). Among fictions of the last few years built around historic characters of some importance this book stands well toward the front. Its subject is John Wesley; or rather, the union of what used to be called "amativeness" with more impersonal spiritual forces in a single character. The world at large, denied any wide comprehension of such outstanding figures, has always been too ready to suspect hypocrisy, and finds a perennial interest in the scrutiny of a private life which it cannot completely reconcile with the public profession.

No doubt Mrs. Oemler became interested in Wesley because of his years in her native State. She was born at Savannah, Georgia, in 1879, the daughter of Richard Hoban Conway and Helena Browne Conway. She was married to John Norton Oemler, of Savannah, in 1901, and has made her home in that city since. Her first book, published in 1917, attracted no noticeable amount of attention, but the publisher, after months had passed, was astonished by the total of sales. Succeeding novels were of the same agreeable popular type—until, with "The Holy Lover," Mrs. Oemler ventured into a much more ambitious and difficult territory. But she has made a worth-while adventure of it and has aroused a definite expectancy of important work to come.

BOOKS BY MARIE CONWAY OEMLER

1917. SLIPPY MCGEE. *Century.*
1919. A WOMAN NAMED SMITH. *Century.*

1920. The Purple Heights. *Century.*
1921. Where the Young Child Was and Other Christmas Stories. *Century.*
1922. Two Shall Be Born. *Century.*
1925. His Wife-in-Law. *Century.*
1927. The Holy Lover. *Liveright.*

MARTHA OSTENSO

WHAT could be more proper than that a realistic writer should herself be the heroine of a romantic experience? Martha Ostenso, as most novel-readers are aware, came out of the utter obscurity of Those-Who-Would-Write into the rather blinding publicity attending the winner of a $13,500 prize. If that is not romantic, it ought to be.

Now it is the experience of publishers that nothing is more common than what may be called the one-book author. And nothing connected with a prize contest is more embarrassing than the problem of detecting such authorship. It is really an insoluble problem. The prize must go for the best novel. No publisher cares about a single book, however tremendous its sale; he is looking for an author, that is, a person capable of a succession of books. If he is a sound publisher, he had rather begin with a few books that make no money, or even lose a little, provided the writer has real story-power and staying-power—for then the ultimate harvest (and not of dollars merely) will be great.

But there is no certain way of spotting the one-book writer—the writer who has one good book in him, no others. The only real clew is the submission of a first novel that is obviously autobiographical. That often augurs ill for the future. To take an instance: No person of literary experience could tell, from F. Scott Fitzgerald's "This Side of Paradise," whether the young man was a novelist or not. He had poured out, with singular freshness and vitality, the life he had seen and lived and the emotion that was in him. But this implied nothing

as to his ability to create "a form of imagined life, clearer than reality," which is what a novel must generally be.

And a prize contest is the blindest of adventures. Therefore it was a very special triumph to uncover Miss Ostenso by means of one—for here, as is now manifest, we have no one-book writer. No doubt she would have come to the front, prize or no prize. The service of the award, however, is not simply to the author, in clearing her path and making it level instead of up-hill; the service is equally one to us who read, who thus may have the new pleasure from its outset.

II

"Where the long arm of the Hardangerfjord penetrates farthest into the rugged mountains of the coast of Norway, the Ostenso family has lived, in the township that bears its name, since the days of the Vikings. The name means Eastern Sea, and was assumed centuries ago by an adventurous forebear who dreamed of extending his holdings over the mountains, and through the lowlands of Sweden, eastward to the shores of the Baltic. Although his dream never came true, the family name recalls it and the family tradition of land-holding has persisted unbroken; the land that borders the lovely fjord is still in the family's possession, handed down from eldest son to eldest son.

"My father, a younger son, was free to indulge his roving disposition. A few years after marrying my mother he decided to emigrate to America.

"My mother's parents lived high up in the mountains, remote from the softening influence of the coast towns. At their home it was, near the little village of Haukeland, that I was born. This, the first of many small towns in which I have lived, is known to me only through hearsay, for when I was two years old we came to America.

"The story of my childhood is a tale of seven little towns in Minnesota and South Dakota. Towns of the field and prairie all, redolent of the soil from which they had sprung and eloquent of that struggle common to the farmer the world over, a struggle but transferred from the Ostenso and Haukeland of the Old World to the richer loam of the new. They should have a story written about them, those seven mean yet glorious little towns of my childhood! In one of them, on the dun prairies of South Dakota, I learned to speak English. What a lovely language I found it to be, with words in it like 'pail' and 'funeral' and ugly words too, like 'laughter' and 'cake' and 'scratch'! What strange sounds the new words made to me!

"Later, in another of my little towns, I learned that it was fun to make things with words. It was while living in a little town in Minnesota that I became a regular contributor to the Junior Page of the Minneapolis *Journal,* and was rewarded for my literary trial-balloons at the rate of eighty cents a column. In the public school of that little town there still hangs, perhaps, a large print of a rural scene in a resplendent frame, with a neat nameplate at the bottom of it. That also came from the *Journal,* in recognition of an essay which, in my eleven-year-old opinion, placed me abreast of Emerson.

"When I was fifteen years old I bade good-by to the Seven Little Towns. My father's restless spirit drove him north to the newer country. The family settled in Manitoba.

"It was during a summer vacation from my university work that I went into the lake district of Manitoba, well toward the frontier of that northern civilization. My novel, 'Wild Geese,' lay there, waiting to be put into words. Here was the raw material out of which Little Towns were made. Here was human nature stark, un-

attired in the convention of a smoother, softer life. A thousand stories are there, still to be written."

More formally recorded: Martha Ostenso was born in Bergen, Norway, in 1900, the daughter of Sigurd Brigt Ostenso and Lena Tungeland Ostenso. Her schooling was mostly in Minnesota and at the Brandon (Canada) Collegiate School. Afterward she attended the University of Manitoba. She began writing, as an adult in all seriousness, at Winnipeg in 1920. In 1921-22 she took a course in the technique of the novel at Columbia University, New York. Her first novel, "Wild Geese" (1925), gave her trouble and she put it aside in some discouragement. Friends in Minneapolis who had read the manuscript drew her attention to the prize contest instituted jointly by *Pictorial Review,* Dodd, Mead & Company, and Famous Players-Lasky Corporation, urging Miss Ostenso to finish her book and enter it in the competition. This she did, winning the prize and producing a best-seller of a merit much greater than most best-sellers have.

Before "Wild Geese" she had done secretarial work for a while with a charity organization in Brooklyn, New York. She really began as a poet, her very first book of all, a collection of her verse, having appeared the year before her novel. Miss Ostenso now lives in New Jersey, near Closter, on the Hudson River Palisades.

III

"I leave it to those who argue about the relative influences of heredity and environment to decide the responsibility. . . . The blood of the Norsemen? The Seven Little Towns? I do not know." It is quite evidently both, and about equally, in "Wild Geese" and the succeeding novels. To take them in order:

"Wild Geese" is a story of life in the bleak farm lands on the northern fringe of cultivation. The soil, harsh and unyielding, claims a desperate allegiance from the man who would coax it to bear a harvest. The weather is a grudging friend and a bitter foe.

Caleb Gare is the most prosperous farmer in Oeland, but that is because the soil has imbued him with its own terrible tenacity. His one passion is more land. His wife—unprotesting for the sake of her son and firstborn, who is not Caleb's child—and his children are held in thrall by the power of his personality and are to him merely slaves in the task he has set his heart upon. He is gentle-spoken and implacable. He is merciless and he walks softly. In him Miss Ostenso has drawn a villain of a really towering order, even for fiction. But she has drawn him justly; one sees his intense single-mindedness and his clear if ruthless purpose. How he dotes upon his beautiful field of flax! Every member of the family is distinct and real to the reader. Only one of them has any courage against Caleb, his daughter, Judith, impetuous and strong, who knows and dares to say that her father is a cruel tyrant. She has seen the flight of the wild geese, going south, going free.

The action of the book is very melodramatic toward the close, but every page from the first cries out for such a culmination; the tribute to Miss Ostenso's skill is the reader's exultation as the end breaks upon him. The book has that very rare thing in American fiction, tragic quality—which has nothing to do with a tragic ending. A good deal of the old Greek feeling envelops the story, the feeling that a divine justice is somehow at work to right human wrongs and punish human evil. The exciting history of the Gares, really compressed into a single summer, is seen through the eyes of the school-teacher, compelled by the boarding system of such tiny commu-

nities to live with the family. One cannot avoid a feeling that the Gares were actual and that Miss Ostenso was the teacher; but this is after-knowledge. To one knowing nothing of the author's history, "Wild Geese" is pure novel, and as satisfactory as it is unusual.

The second novel, "The Dark Dawn" (1926), is less convincing. Hattie Murker, a woman of indomitable will and unrestrained ambition, marries Lucian Dorrit, a farmer's boy whose days have been crowded with dreams and whose young ideals fit him most imperfectly for such a marriage. In the gray stone house on the Murker hill a drama of much bitterness moves scene by scene to its crisis. There is not as much justice, perhaps, in Miss Ostenso's portrait of Hattie Murker as marked her delineation of Caleb Gare—or it may be that the issue of justice is more obscure and difficult. Many readers find it hard to feel sufficiently compassionate toward the young husband, whose pitiful weakness leads him into behavior that is sometimes childish and once or twice too near the ridiculous.

If "The Dark Dawn" seemed to raise some question of Miss Ostenso's talent—it is a singularly humorless novel—the question has been dissipated by "The Mad Carews" (1927). Here is something sufficiently like the first two books, in strength, story-interest, the element of drama and sure characterization; yet sufficiently different, too, and perfect evidence that Miss Ostenso is no mere "repeater."

The Carews are the legend and the boast of their countryside. The men of that family take their love where they find it and marry where they will—finding, it must be allowed, no women to match them. Indeed, as all their neighbors know, the woman who marries a Carew becomes one of the tribe, springing to its defense, rather proud than otherwise of her husband's bold derelictions.

So it is until Bayliss Carew rides into the sloughs of Elder's Hollow and takes Elsa Bowers to wife. This match is the subject of the novel, and its history is a little odyssey of marriage and love.

Nothing Martha Ostenso has done is so good as this third book. Aside from its excellence in the story of Bayliss and Elsa, it rides as irresistibly past the reader as any Carew on horseback. These men are a fascinating breed. But there is any amount of vital characterization of individual members of the family. In particular, Hildreth Carew, who is the actual power in the tribe, is a portrayal that any novelist might be well satisfied to own.

IV

The late Stuart P. Sherman, the best critic in America until his lamented death, rendered a verdict on Martha Ostenso. He had only the evidence of "Wild Geese" to go upon. It shows his critical genius very fully to quote what he said, since, with the appearance of two more novels, his words ring more truly than when they were penned:

Let me state some of Miss Ostenso's limitations, either natural or self-imposed. She has not attempted to be witty or clever or showy. She has not much busied herself with interpreting landscape or with expressing the soul of The Corn, The Wheat, The Hemp, The Tobacco or other local crops. She is not verbally fastidious nor a sensitive stylist in pursuit of the subtler music of thoughts. She is a little blunt and quite downright and factual—like the saga writers. She does not dally in the sentimental fringe and violet shadow of her occasions.

What she lacks in subtlety she makes up in strength. She grips her human theme as a man takes hold of plow handles, driving the colter in. She conspicuously excels where the young novelist is ordinarily weak: in firmly

conceiving and thoroughly dramatizing character and in the fundamental work of composition, which is seeing the thing through, and thus preëstablishing lucidity and order in the movement of her narrative.

Here is a novelist with genuine dramatic imagination, power to penetrate to the viscera of very diverse lives and, withal, endowed with a sense of form which has hitherto been rarely coupled in American writers of fiction with anything like Miss Ostenso's vital sense for substance.

Books by Martha Ostenso

1924. The Far Land. Poems. *Boni.*
1925. Wild Geese. *Dodd, Mead.*
1926. The Dark Dawn. *Dodd, Mead.*
1927. The Mad Carews. *Dodd, Mead.*

ANNE PARRISH

Award of the $2,000 Harper prize for "The Perennial Bachelor" (1925) was first notice of Anne Parrish as a novelist to many thousand readers. Yet she had published two novels previously, both marked by talent and presaging better work to come.

These were "A Pocketful of Poses" (1923) and "Semi-Attached" (1924). It must be confessed that "The Perennial Bachelor" is a great advance upon them.

"A Pocketful of Poses" is the story of a girl who poses from childhood until to be affected and romantically untruthful becomes second nature. The range is from almost farcical humor to tragic earnest, for this inveterate tendency finally creates a false situation of the most serious proportions.

"Semi-Attached" opens in Switzerland and transfers to America. The principals are two young Americans. The girl has seen too much of unhappy marriage, and has seen it too closely, to be willing to wed. With considerable difficulty she persuades the young man to dispense with an actual ceremony. Let them return to America, apparently having been married abroad, and proceed comfortably on the settled assumption of other people that they are at least legally joined. And this rash enterprise is undertaken.

In both these novels a sparkling humor and no inconsiderable gift of satire were evident; the author also showed a ready command of mood and, especially in "Semi-Attached," a gift for the communication of deep and serious feeling.

If "The Perennial Bachelor" steps far beyond them

much of the credit is due to its sounder substance. Most readers of this chapter will no doubt be familiar with the story. Victor Campion is the only son of the family. He is born within twenty-four hours of his father's death by a fall from a horse. His mother and his sisters pamper him. Public school is too harsh for their sensitive little boy. The tyrannical Victor, observing that his mother is much attracted to a man who would cherish her and whose wealth would protect them all, becomes hysterical; the terrified mother resigns thought of a second marriage. At a later age the boy ridicules the suitor who represents his sister's only chance of happiness in life—quite mercilessly destroys that chance. Sent to Harvard, he recoils from the roughness of the male world, and comes back home. He is ineffably conceited and a girl jilts him. Nothing will answer but that his remaining sister shall spend her life coddling him. At sixty he is still a beau who goes to young parties, unaware that every one laughs at him.

The difficulty of covering sixty years satisfactorily in a novel of ordinary length is beautifully surmounted. Groups of years slip by, almost unnoticed, between the ending of one chapter and the beginning of the next. The novel proceeds in a series of smooth glimpses of the family; and not only of the family but of the period. With what Kathleen Norris, praising the book, called a "pinpoint realism," Anne Parrish fixes the year, the month and almost the week of her scene. The popular song of the hour, the Merry Widow hat that is being worn, the jackets worn by little boys and the blue flannel boating costumes of girls, the autograph albums, violent laughter at "the word spoon, the sight of a spoon," the fashionable flower and the courses at formal dinners—these and a thousand other exact details give verisimilitude to every page. In explanation Miss Parrish says that she worked

four years on the book before beginning to write it, ransacked attics and museums, read old journals and letters and magazines. A notebook of typewritten material was twice as thick as the manuscript of the novel.

The detail in "Tomorrow Morning" (1926) is less impressive. This is a story of the present day and of hope deferred. Kate studies at an art school but an early marriage postpones the career she looked forward to. With the birth soon afterward of her son, the career is gone forever; but she does not know it. We follow closely her life in a small American town, pretty completely peopled for the reader. The day comes when, in one of the periodical overhaulings of Kate's girlhood canvases, her son reflects that it was a good thing she never was able to go on with her painting, as she hadn't a speck of talent, anyway. . . . The reader is likely to have some reservations about this novel not made in reading "The Perennial Bachelor." The humorous relief is perhaps not always kind. Miss Parrish gives, at moments, a faint but distinct impression of looking down on some of her people and of laughing at them, not with them. Nor does it appear that she knows these people so well as the Campions of "The Perennial Bachelor." Again, as so often with novels by the same author, a great part of the inequality is inherent in the material.

II

Anne Parrish was born in Colorado Springs, Colorado, in 1888, the daughter of Thomas Clarkson Parrish and Anne Lodge Parrish. The family runs somewhat to painting: Maxfield Parrish is a cousin and Anne Parrish's brother, Dillwyn Parrish, is a painter and illustrator.

Anne Parrish grew up in Colorado Springs and in Claymont, near Wilmington, Delaware. She was educated at private schools. In 1915 she was married to Charles

Albert Corliss, a native of Troy, New York. They have homes in New York and in Englewood, New Jersey, where Anne Parrish is much in the company of her husband's sister, Mrs. Thomas W. Lamont, wife of the member of the firm of J. P. Morgan & Company.

With her brother, Dillwyn, Anne Parrish wrote and illustrated two books for children, "Knee-High to a Grasshopper" and "The Dream Coach," each doing half of the writing and half of the pictures. Brother and sister were also collaborators on a book of sketches and short stories, "Lustres" (1924).

Twenty-nine Chestnut Street, the Greens' house in "Tomorrow Morning," is Anne Parrish's childhood home, moved East from Colorado Springs for the purposes of the novel. The Campions' house in "The Perennial Bachelor" is the home of her mother's childhood and her own youth, in Claymont, Delaware, "the place I love much the best in the world." This preference means the more as she has traveled all her life and been in most parts of the earth.

Books by Anne Parrish

1923. A Pocketful of Poses. *Doran. Harper.*
1923. Knee-High to a Grasshopper (with her brother, Dillwyn Parrish). For children. *Macmillan.*
1924. The Dream Coach (with Dillwyn Parrish). For children. *Macmillan.*
1924. Semi-Attached. *Doran. Harper.*
1924. Lustres. Short stories. *Doran. Harper.*
1925. The Perennial Bachelor. *Harper.*
1927. Tomorrow Morning. *Harper.*

JULIA PETERKIN

For the better part of a year, as this is written, and in a number running past the first hundred thousand, Americans have been reading a book called "Black April," most of them with the sensation of never having read of negroes before. The circumstances in which the novel was produced would not, ordinarily, to the trained observer, denote the appearance of a new author of continuance. But as a matter of fact, Julia Peterkin had published a book before "Black April," and is now at work on a novel to follow it; so the doubtful signs are canceled.

Her first book was "Green Thursday," brought out in 1924 in a limited edition. Her third book, which may be out by the time this chapter comes under readers' eyes, will be about Zeda, one of the characters of "Black April," the one who said:

" 'No man livin' is worth one drop o' water dat dreans out a 'oman's eye.' "

The real Zeda, says Mrs. Peterkin, is "magnificent—a Diane de Poitiers."

But to reduce this account to some kind of order:

She was born on Halloween, 1880, Julia Mood, and at sixteen had graduated from Converse College, which gave her an M.A. the year following. She began teaching and while at Fort Motte, South Carolina, met and was married to W. G. Peterkin, a planter. She became at once the mistress of Lang Syne plantation, ruler with her husband of a miniature principality composed of many negroes, few whites. The nearest doctor is ten miles away and Mrs. Peterkin often serves as doctor, judge, jury and Providence.

For about twenty years this statuesque woman with the red hair and the green-gray eyes ruled her house and its dependents, and brought up her son. Only in middle age did she turn to writing. A few critics, Laurence Stallings and H. L. Mencken among them, detected her excellence at once. The South Carolina negroes of whom she wrote had never before been encountered in fiction. Even their language is different—the dialect called South Carolina Gullah. Eventually Mr. Mencken persuaded a publisher to bring out these stories. This is the book called "Green Thursday" (1924), and generally spoken of as short stories or sketches. But it is almost as much a novel as "Black April," though slenderer in story.

In the summer of 1927 Dale Warren reported a conversation with Mrs. Peterkin and some impressions, both freely drawn upon in what follows.[1]

Born in South Carolina and quickly left motherless, Julia Mood was brought up by a negro mammy, and therefore came not unprepared to her exacting tasks on her husband's plantation.

"I am not really a writer," she told Mr. Warren. "I am a housekeeper, a mother. I like to work with my hands, in the kitchen, in my garden. I like to ride and hunt, I like to play poker, I like to talk." She intimated that her work was not "creative," and when asked why she wrote, replied:

"I don't know whether I'll tell you or not. You might not believe me; you might laugh at me. I write"—she hesitated—"to get rid of the things that disturb me. I know it sounds peculiar, but that is the reason. On the plantation I am very close to life . . . it is all about me . . . several hundred negroes, in fact. It's their lives

[1] This will be published under the title "Julia Peterkin—Impressions and a Conversation," on the front page of the book section of the Boston *Evening Transcript* for December 24, 1927.

that I've known. I have seen sickness and death and superstition and frenzy and desire. My eyes have looked on horror and misery. And these things have stayed with me and upset me. I have had to get rid of them, so I have written them out. . . . It is all really quite simple."

Mr. Warren comments: "Small wonder that Carl Sandburg was quick to recognize her touch."

" 'Black April,' " Mrs. Peterkin explained, "goes by the name of a novel but a large part of it is fact. I got the habit of utilizing incident when I wrote 'Green Thursday.' I had written those sketches as the facts on which they are based had crystallized in my consciousness and had to be given form. In 'Black April' incidents are blended together, of course, in the hope of achieving continuity. When you are writing out of your experience you don't have to rely to any great extent upon your imagination. I have lived among the negroes. I like them. They are my friends, and I have learned so much from them. The years on the plantation have given me plenty of material, my life has been rich, so why try to improve on the truth?

"Blue Brook Plantation is just another name for my own home. April, Zeda, Cousin Big Sue, Breeze, Maum Hannah, Sherry, Joy, Uncle Isaac, even Julia the mule are all a part of my life. I was with April when his toes came off and floated around in the tub, and it was my father who amputated his legs. What April says at the end of the book, he said to me:

" 'Bury me in a man-size box—You un'erstan'?—A man-size—box—I—been—six—feet—fo'—Uncle—Six feet—fo'! ' "

"When I wrote 'Black April' I thought it would be the only novel I should ever write. So I tried to put every-

thing into it, and that is what makes it incoherent.[2] But I had to leave out a lot. There wasn't room for it. That is why I am writing another book."

There is not a white character in "Black April" and Mrs. Peterkin told Mr. Warren: "I shall never write of white people. Their lives are not so colorful." In the interviewer's mind the recollection of the book was vivid and "pictures rose up of hog-killing and duck-hunting, of 'possums and wild turkeys; of birth-night suppers and quiltings; of barnyards and moonlight and cotton fields; of song and prayer and the endless boll-weevil; of love-making and fights to the death; of the life inside those little log cabins 'that nestled under great moss-hung oaks close to the river's edge.' " Mr. Warren does not exaggerate when he speaks of "Black April" as "a piece of work considered by many to be the calmest tragedy since 'Ethan Frome.' "

Once a year Mrs. Peterkin and her husband make a point of leaving the plantation. A change is very necessary for them. But a return is even more necessitous. "Our people live in the houses in which they were born. In the South we live on a piece of land which feeds us and to which, when we die, our bodies return." Just after she got home in the autumn of 1927 she wrote to Mr. Warren:

"The plantation always frightens me when I come back to it. Here, life is so untamed. In September, the fields are too lush, too green for comfort. This is the time when snakes go blind and walk boldly in the open. We have to watch where we step. And the red old earth has a canny look as it lies so still, so mute, waiting for us all. Oh, I hope I shall die while the sun shines and not in

[2] Apparently a piece of self-criticism purely. There is no record of any reader finding this fault with the book.

one of these dead black nights when the tide of the year is full, and so strong."

Books by Julia Peterkin

1924. Green Thursday. *Knopf.*
1927. Black April. *Bobbs-Merrill.*

ELEANOR H. PORTER

She added a word to the language.

Her books, relatively few in number, had in most instances each one a sale in the hundred thousands. Although she died May 23, 1920, half a dozen of her novels are much read to-day—are more popular, indeed, than many best-sellers of the intervening years continue to be.

Since her death another writer has written one or more continuations of the story of Pollyanna making that young woman perhaps not less glad but a little more sensible of the weight of human woe. Or possibly this is simply the added seriousness of adulthood. But it must be remembered that Mrs. Porter herself protested against a too facile view of Pollyanna's attitude. She once said:

"You know I have been made to suffer from the Pollyanna books. I have been placed often in a false light. People have thought that Pollyanna chirped that she was 'glad' at everything. . . . I have never believed that we ought to deny discomfort and pain and evil; I have merely thought that it is far better to 'greet the unknown with a cheer.' "

It was most unlikely that she would create a heroine who would be glad over ill-health; she struggled with it in her mother, an invalid for many years, and was not free from it herself. Born in Littleton, New Hampshire, the daughter of Francis H. Hodgman and Llewella Woolson Hodgman, she had to abandon high school for an outdoor existence. When her health had been somewhat regained she studied music at the New England Conservatory. She was married to John Lyman Porter in 1892

and for the last eighteen years of her life resided in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Mrs. Porter was one of the novelists who work from a synopsis, and one of the few who adhere to such an outline. "Pollyanna" differed little from the prospectus, but the famous "glad game" did invent itself as she was writing the second chapter. The publication of the story in 1913 was only less influential than the World War. White Mountain cabins, Colorado teahouses, Texan babies, Indiana apartment houses, and a brand of milk were immediately named for the new character; there were Glad Clubs and likewise there were Pollyannathematizers; Pollyannalysis arose to combat psycho-analysis. Of these manifestations perhaps few now linger, but a conception persists, a little warped no doubt but extremely useful.

The "uplift" was integral to Mrs. Porter's work. Pollyanna, however, is less of an uplifter than the boy of "Just David." You feel that God made Pollyanna as she is but that Mrs. Porter made David. The girl heroines of "The Road to Understanding" and "Mary-Marie" bring their warring parents together—and it is all a "story." These other characters lack something that Pollyanna had, though it may have been only a sublime assurance. Even the touching picture of blindness in "Dawn" makes no such impression as the Pollyanna of the original book. Her philosophy may be gold or trash; she rightfully exists, there is no doubt of that.

Books by Eleanor H. Porter

1907. Cross Currents. *Wilde.*
1908. The Turn of the Tide. Sequel to Cross Currents. *Wilde.*
1911. The Story of Marco.
1911. Miss Billy. *Page.*

1912. Miss Billy's Decision. *Page.*
1913. Pollyanna. *Page.*
1914. Miss Billy Married. *Page.*
1915. Pollyanna Grows Up.
1916. Just David. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1917. The Road to Understanding. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1918. Oh, Money! Money! *Houghton Mifflin.*
1919. Dawn. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1919. Mary-Marie. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1921. Sister Sue. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1924. Money, Love and Kate. Short stories. *Doran.*
The Tie That Binds: Tales of Love and Marriage. *Houghton Mifflin.*
The Tangled Threads: Just Tales. *Houghton Mifflin.*
Across the Years: Tales of Age. *Houghton Mifflin.*

OLIVE HIGGINS PROUTY

To be a "best seller," a novel, in the United States, need only sell 50,000 copies, or one copy to every 2,000 of our population. Therefore to say that a novel is in the 100,000 class is to place it among about a dozen novels of the thousands published that year. This was the fortune of "Stella Dallas" (1922), by Olive Higgins Prouty; and the same popularity seems now to be assured for "Conflict," published in the autumn of 1927. The five-year interval is unusual, although it has generally been found wise to allow two or even three years after a 100,000 sale before the next novel is put out.

"Stella Dallas" was dramatized and Mrs. Leslie Carter acted in it. Then the movies took it in hand. Mrs. Prouty's appeal may be understood from a brief description of "Conflict."

Sheilah Miller is a beautiful high school girl who is drawn to Felix Nawn, a clumsy, silent, pasty-faced, furtive boy of poor family. For Felix she refuses the invitations of a handsome and popular boy. She steals away to places with Felix, unable to resist the slow crawl of his fingers up her wrist. These adolescent encounters are generally followed by a repulsive dream of a Chinaman and fat, white, clinging slugworms. After a nervous breakdown, Sheilah is sent away to school.

Felix, who had once cheated in school rather than fail before Sheilah, goes to college. There, quite naturally, he is a social outcast. His one gift is for carving wood and for cabinet and inlay work, which he executes beautifully although incapable of proper design. To make a

gift box for Sheilah he neglects his studies. Endeavoring to pass mid-year examinations, he cheats, is caught, and is expelled. Returning to his home town, he gets a job in a bank. When America enters the World War, Sheilah feels impelled to promise to marry him. He gets as far as a training camp in England and is further damaged by the kick of one of the horses he is assigned to tend. When he comes home Sheilah fulfills her promise.

They live in abject poverty in a wooden tenement outside of Boston. There are four children of whom the youngest and only attractive one dies. Sheilah verges on another nervous breakdown.

Once, in her high school days, Sheilah singing in a ray of sunlight in church had arrested the attention of Roger Dallinger. On the way home from church he had so vexed Cicely Morgan with his questions that they quarreled. Cicely was Sheilah's cousin, of excellent family and an heiress. Roger, who had intended to ask her to marry him that day, went away without speaking.

And now Cicely, unmarried, with whitening hair—rich, still in love with Roger, but with her pride—chances upon Sheilah in her poverty and illness, and sends her to an expensive mountain resort, and the unpromising children to summer camps. The boy had already been caught cheating in school.

In the mountains Sheilah meets Roger Dallinger. Their friendship becomes close. Roger exercises commendable restraint. So does Sheilah, but after hearing the beating of his heart "she pushed against him."

He placed his lips long and gently on the edge of the wine-cup, but he did not drink. . . . He hadn't kissed her. . . . Oh, had ever any woman before received such a strange, illusive and provocative caress? What had he meant by it? What had he felt? . . . His breathing had been difficult. His lips had trembled. She had felt them

tremble. It was then that she had suddenly realized where she was, what she was doing, and with a start had broken away from him.

Although Roger calls on Sheilah in her tenement while Cicely is calling, Cicely does not abate her generosity toward Sheilah and the children—who are now more promising. (There is not much space for the children but they are just kept at places "where fineness is an ideal" and that improves them.) One night in the dark tenement hallway Roger again touches the edge of the wine-cup. "And this time he drank!"

After that first kiss in the dark outside the little front room Roger told Sheilah all there was to tell about himself during the years before she knew him, and asked her to ask him all there was to ask, which is more convincing to a woman than any declaration. . . . For a little while their spirits became molten into one over the white coals of truth. Oh, if they only hadn't possessed bodies.

The dream of the Chinaman and the slugworms recurred. But before the bodies became irresistible, Felix lost his job as the result of a theft concealed from Sheilah. Separation from Roger follows. Cicely has almost won him. After a perfect dinner, his hand has closed over hers; he is about to propose marriage when the telephone rings. It is a message that Felix is dead, killed by a train—it is, in fact, as the reader knows, suicide. Roger immediately wonders if he ought not to go to Sheilah and Cicely lets him go. The novel closes with a long distance call in the course of which Roger asks when he may come to Sheilah, who replies: "Later. In the spring, please."

The story achieves reality in one figure, Sheilah's mother, who appears in the first quarter of the book. Mrs. Miller is one of those mothers who have read all the books on child-rearing. She practices, with a bright

selfishness, all that she has read. She permits Sheilah no privacy and after the girl has gone to bed sits beside her, caressing her forehead with slow strokes.

II

Olive Higgins Prouty was born in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1882, the daughter of Milton Prince Higgins and Katherine Chapin Higgins. She was graduated from Smith College in 1904, and was married to Lewis I. Prouty of Spencer and Brookline, Massachusetts, in 1907. They have two children. Mrs. Prouty's home is in Brookline.

Books by Olive Higgins Prouty

1913. Bobbie, General Manager.
1916. The Fifth Wheel.
1918. The Star in the Window.
1919. Good Sports.
1922. Stella Dallas. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1927. Conflict. *Houghton Mifflin.*

ALICE HEGAN RICE

THERE are probably countries which have not known "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch," but an expert knowledge of geography is necessary to locate them. "Mrs. Wiggs" has been used as a nickname in Korea and the play made from the story has been acted in India.

Alice (Caldwell) Hegan Rice was born in 1870 in Shelbyville, Kentucky, the daughter of Samuel Watson Hegan and Sallie Caldwell Hegan. She was married to Cale Young Rice, the poet, in 1902. Her home is in Louisville, Kentucky.

The original of Mrs. Wiggs was a poor but merry and philosophic woman living in a section of Louisville out by the railroad tracks. The story was written in blank pages of a disused business ledger and was first read to a literary group in Louisville.

BOOKS BY ALICE HEGAN RICE

1901. MRS. WIGGS OF THE CABBAGE PATCH. *Century.*
1903. LOVEY MARY. *Century.*
1905. SANDY. *Century.*
1907. CAPTAIN JUNE. *Century.*
1909. MR. OPP. *Century.*
1912. A ROMANCE OF BILLY-GOAT HILL. *Century.*
THE HONORABLE PERCIVAL. *Century.*
1917. CALVARY ALLEY. *Century.*
1918. MISS MINK'S SOLDIER AND OTHER STORIES. *Century.*
1921. QUIN. *Century.*
1921. TURN ABOUT TALES (with her husband, Cale Young Rice). *Century.*
1925. WINNERS AND LOSERS (with her husband, Cale Young Rice). *Century.*

GRACE S. RICHMOND

For the last twenty-five years the stories of Grace S. Richmond have been coveted acquisitions in the offices of women's magazines of wide circulation. Ever since she created the character of Red Pepper Burns, in 1910, her books have appeared as regularly on the best-seller lists as on the bookshop counters.

She was born in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, the daughter of a Baptist clergyman, Charles Edward Smith, D.D., and Catherine A. Kimball Smith. Some of her youth was spent in Syracuse, New York, and private tutors gave her college courses. She was married to Dr. Nelson Guernsey Richmond, of Fredonia, New York, in 1887. A short story published in 1891 remained her solitary appearance in print until 1898. Her first book appeared in 1905.

As a clergyman's daughter and a physician's wife, the suggestions for Redfield Pepper Burns and Robert McPherson Black must have come very naturally to her. These two—the generous, red-haired, impulsive and humane doctor and the popular and equally admirable preacher—appear in the books by which Mrs. Richmond is best known.

Books by Grace S. Richmond

1905. The Indifference of Juliet.
1906. The Second Violin. *Doubleday.*
1907. With Juliet in England.
1908. Round the Corner in Gay Street.
1908. On Christmas Day in the Morning. Republished 1925. *Doubleday.*

1909. A Court of Inquiry. *Doubleday.*
1910. On Christmas Day in the Evening. Republished 1925. *Doubleday.*
1910. Red Pepper Burns.
1911. Strawberry Acres.
1913. Mrs. Red Pepper.
1914. The Twenty-fourth of June. *Doubleday.*
1916. Under the Country Sky. *Doubleday.*
Under the Christmas Stars. *Doubleday.*
Brotherly House. *Doubleday.*
1917. Red Pepper's Patients. *Doubleday.*
1917. The Whistling Mother. *Doubleday.*
1917. The Brown Study. *Doubleday.*
1918. The Enlisting Wife. *Doubleday.*
1919. Red and Black. *Doubleday.*
1922. Foursquare. *Doubleday.*
1923. Rufus. *Doubleday.*
1924. Red of the Redfields. *Doubleday.*
1926. Cherry Square. *Doubleday.*
1927. Lights Up. *Doubleday.*

Sources on Grace S. Richmond

"Grace S. Richmond, Builder of Homes," by Willson Whitman. Booklet. Published in 1926 by Doubleday, Page & Company.

MARY ROBERTS RINEHART

A PITTSBURGH girl of good family who had chosen to train as a hospital nurse became, when nearly twenty, the wife of a physician. Three sons were born to them in the next ten years and the mother's health was poor. Toward the end of this period of invalidism, when she was in her twenty-seventh year, she began to write little articles, verse for children and even short stories. One day, having sold a poem or two, she went to New York and made a discouraging round of publishers.

With one thing and another, in the first year of sustained effort at writing, she made $1,200. A certain amount of tolerance in the family changed toward encouragement and she continued to write, sometimes on a card table, then with two fingers on a typewriter. It had mostly to be managed when the children were out for a walk, asleep, or playing.

After three years her first book was published. It was a popular success and has since become a landmark in mystery-detective fiction.

At forty-one the woman who had been an invalid spent forty days in the saddle through unknown mountains in Montana and Washington, as unwearied as her sons. Earning an annual income of $50,000 or more from her writing was no trick at all. She was shortly to refuse the editorship of a great woman's magazine, double and treble her income while actually lessening her output, take her place as one of the distinguished hostesses in the society of the national capital, and write her best book.

II

Mary Roberts Rinehart was born in Pittsburgh in 1876, the daughter of Thomas Beveridge Roberts and Cornelia Gilleland Roberts. She was educated in the city's public and high schools and at the Pittsburgh Training School for Nurses. She was married to Stanley Marshall Rinehart, M.D., of Pittsburgh, April 21, 1896. The degree of Doctor of Letters was conferred on her in 1925 by George Washington University.

For about twenty years the Rineharts lived in Sewickley, a suburb of Pittsburgh. Then the World War drew Dr. Rinehart to Washington and supervision of health in military training camps. He has remained in the Government health service ever since and the Rineharts have continued to live in Washington, at first in an apartment in the Wardman Park Hotel (that of the late Senator Boies Penrose of Pennsylvania) and latterly in a home on Massachusetts Avenue. For many years a majority of Mrs. Rinehart's summers have been spent in Wyoming.

III

With the exception of four travel books of personal experience and a volume recording her experiences as a war correspondent in 1914-15, all of Mrs. Rinehart's books are fiction. Her growth as a novelist has been retarded by the very prodigality of her gifts as a writer and story-teller. Editors have tempted her, and when money ceased to be a temptation, her generous friendliness and marked mental vitality have urged her to this and that enterprise—a short story, a series of editorial articles, a piece of brilliant reporting.

The stage has also been a distraction. Two plays in which Avery Hopwood was her collaborator, "Seven Days" (from the book, "When a Man Marries") and

"The Bat" (founded on "The Circular Staircase") were great successes.

Her development as a novelist can be traced, and her varied talent as a fiction writer can be sufficiently illustrated, by a scrutiny of the following books:

"The Circular Staircase" (1908).

"The Amazing Adventures of Letitia Carberry" (1911).

"K." (1915).

"A Poor Wise Man" (1920).

"The Red Lamp" (1925).

"Lost Ecstasy" (1927).

Two of these, "A Poor Wise Man" and "The Red Lamp," were comparative failures; and readers familiar with Mrs. Rinehart's work may wonder at the omission from the list of "The Amazing Interlude" and "The Breaking Point." Neither, I feel, is as significant, for better or for worse, as the novels named, though both are among Mrs. Rinehart's best and most popular stories.

"The Circular Staircase" was Mrs. Rinehart's first book. The most remarkable thing about this mystery tale was its construction. It still holds a chief place in fiction of this type by virtue of its forward movement, which is extremely rare. Most story-tellers, having brought about the murder of Arnold Armstrong in the opening pages, would content themselves with a suitable maze leading finally to the revelation of the murderer. Mrs. Rinehart makes the murder simply a dreadful incident in a mysterious crime that has not been accomplished—that, as the reader quickly perceives, is in the process of being committed. A baffling and increasingly desperate struggle with an unknown criminal attempting an unknown deed is what gives "The Circular Staircase" its quality of thrilling drama. Since Wilkie Collins, no one had shown so much skill in the mystery novel.

With this splendid beginning, it was natural that Mrs.

Rinehart should continue to write mystery stories. "The Man in Lower Ten," "The Window at the White Cat," "The Case of Jenny Brice" and "The After House" all appeared in the next six years. "The After House" was based upon an actual crime.[1]

But "The Circular Staircase" had other constituents of more importance to Mrs. Rinehart as a writer than her skill in plot. No one can miss the author's gift for characterization; and, of course, the farcical humor, a deft and sustained counterpoint to the drama, doubles the reader's enjoyment. The talent for farce had further play in "When a Man Marries" and "Where There's a Will"; but came to its first full climax between these two stories in "The Amazing Adventures of Letitia Carberry."

In Letitia Carberry, or Tish, Mrs. Rinehart created a character that her readers have never allowed her to relinquish. The first book has been followed by stories accumulating at the rate of a book every five years—"Tish," "More Tish" and "Tish Plays the Game" are the titles. Tish is a well-to-do, excitement-loving spinster who puts great faith in blackberry cordial and will attempt to mend a canoe with chewing gum, should more trustworthy material be lacking. Though single she shoulders—not quite as easily as she shoulders a shotgun—the great responsibility of two other middle-aged women, Lizzie and Aggie (the latter, widow of a roofer who died at the height of his career). There is also a nephew for Tish to supervise.

"The Amazing Adventures of Letitia Carberry" relates a series of mysterious, scandalous and altogether extraordinary occurrences in the hospital where Tish is a pa-

[1] The three murders, in 1896, on the barkentine *Herbert Fuller*, bound from Boston to Argentina. See the superb account, "Mate Bram!" in Edmund Lester Pearson's book, "Studies in Murder" (Macmillan, 1924).

tient. The book gave Mrs. Rinehart richer opportunities for farce than "The Circular Staircase," and nearly as much chance in respect of plot and mystery. It is plain that Tish grows out of Rachel Innes in the earlier story but Tish is much more vigorously done and is in every way more of a person. "Letitia Carberry" must be counted as one of the best things of Mrs. Rinehart's, but it is possible that her success penalized her too. She had created a capital character whose popularity would continue; and when she might be creating fresh and happy characterizations she would find herself writing again about Tish. Her proficiency in the broad strokes and high coloring of Tish and her companions would almost certainly make harder the achievement of portraiture less amusing but more ambitious.

She found the way to it through a romantic love story of a little American girl in Vienna, "The Street of Seven Stars," not important except as the book which preceded "K." Appearing in 1915, "K." is still the novel for which, possibly, Mrs. Rinehart is most widely known, although it is to be hoped that "Lost Esctasy" will deprive it of this distinction.

It went without saying that on the structural side "K." would be admirable; that in a book of 410 pages the most necessary revelation would not come until page 407; that in half a page the reader would be rapt out of laughter into pity and tenderness; that the characterization would be such as to be effective at all distances, in all lights, with almost all readers. But Mrs. Rinehart did more.

She managed to present a wide variety of persons and a great range of emotions and she did it by tying her people in a perfectly astonishing number of relationships. The story runs the gamut of sex. K. and Sidney are the ripe lovers. Joe's unrequited love for Sidney is the des-

perate passion of immaturity. Max Wilson's feeling for Sidney is the infatuation of a nature inherently fickle where women are concerned. Carlotta Harrison's love for Max Wilson is the dark passion. The relation between Tillie and Schwitter goes to the bedrock of human instincts, is a thing Thomas Hardy might have concerned himself with. Christine Lorenz and Palmer Howe are the disillusioned married (Christine: "The only difference between me and other brides is that I know what I'm getting"). Grace Irving and Palmer Howe bring before us the man and the woman in their worst relationship. Grace Irving and Johnny Rosenfeld are thwarted motherhood and a blind feeling for justice. K. and Tillie are proofs of the reach of friendship and the efficacy of understanding. K. and Christine give us the woman saved from herself.

The tenth chapter of "K." will not easily be overmatched for poignant feeling. Here is Mr. Schwitter, the nurseryman, middle-aged or further, not very articulate, with a wife in an asylum playing with paper dolls; and here is Tillie, punching meal tickets for Mrs. McKee, not becoming younger, lonelier every day, suffering heartache and disappointment without end. Mr. Schwitter has proposed a certain thing.

"Tillie cowered against the door, her eyes on his. Here before her, embodied in this man, stood all that she had wanted and never had. He meant a home, tenderness, children perhaps. He turned away from the look in her eyes and stared out of the front window.

" 'Them poplars out there ought to be taken away,' he said heavily. 'They're hell on sewers.' "

IV

After "K." the path ahead for Mrs. Rinehart as a novelist might have been fairly straight had she been more

selfish and less a woman of her time. But the World War had begun, she yielded to the temptation to visit the front; and afterward, when America entered, she was eager to serve with her pen. The first collection of Tish stories, a romantic adventure novel of southeastern Europe, "Long Live the King!"; and the stories of a girl just under the "coming-out" age, "Bab, a Sub-Deb"—representing in large part work before the war opened—were all her fiction for several years. But in 1918 she gave us "The Amazing Interlude" and the end of the war found her hard at work on a novel, "Dangerous Days," published in 1919.

Among the not very many romantic novels of the Great War, "The Amazing Interlude" remains conspicuous. "Dangerous Days" was the forerunner of "A Poor Wise Man," a novel into which Mrs. Rinehart put an extraordinary amount of effort. Perhaps if she had made her novel a mere sandwich for brilliant journalism, in the manner of Philip Gibbs, "A Poor Wise Man" might have been as great a popular success as Gibbs's "The Middle of the Road" was to become a few years later. Again, it may be that her failure lay in not attempting the merciless exaggeration which Sinclair Lewis was to practice in "Elmer Gantry." At any rate the theme of "A Poor Wise Man" was a marked departure for its author —Mrs. Rinehart's first attempt to embody current political and social ideas in fiction.

One trouble was that they were too current and like so many other running things have largely run away. But at the time radicalism, kindled by the rise of the Soviet in Russia, crept like a ground fire in a dozen American cities, and very honest people believed our Government in peril. Without necessarily sharing these fears, Mrs. Rinehart wished to represent what was going on. A novelist of great emotional conveyance, she could not confine

her emotion to personal relationships in her story and let the ideas take care of themselves; a first-class reporter, she had to abandon her facts for an invention having the drama requisite to a novel.

The experiment was important. It caused Mrs. Rinehart to give over attempts at a novel of the hour, at least until she shall have her hand more firmly on method. For her next subject she took the strange ability of the mind to forget what it cannot bear to remember. "The Breaking Point" uses all Mrs. Rinehart's skill in the mystery tale but jealously insists on the subordination of plot to characterization. Here at last, after seven years, are people as real as the characters of "K.," and in one or two instances perhaps more so.

She had come to the parting of the ways. "The Breaking Point" was the proof to her that she might at last become a novelist in the sense of having power to make her story a commentary on life. She had done it in "K.," but, somehow, she had lost that grip in the years ensuing, or perhaps she had not had an adequate subject, who can tell? Illness, too, had handicapped her for several years; but this was ameliorating. As if to take stock of her chances, she turned once more to the novel of mystery for the mystery's sake.

"The Red Lamp" was a lesson as instructive as "A Poor Wise Man" had been. As the ingenuities of plot multiply, you feel every nerve in the author's body screaming its protest against the monster, Action, and his steamroller, Event. The necessity for infinite contrivance constantly and fatally interferes with any proper characterization. You feel that these people would be exceedingly interesting if only the story would permit you to know them. But no, something must happen, there must be some new turn, twist or development, some further "clew."

"The Red Lamp" settled it. Mrs. Rinehart reached out for a simple, broad, human subject and her reach extended in the direction of the country where she had spent so many summers. The cowboy, as he exists at present in Wyoming and Montana, was familiar to her and she knew how far away the usual Western story gets from the truth of the cowboy nature. In particular, the stories dealing with his contact with the Eastern girl are romantic nonsense, almost without exception.

"Lost Ecstasy" is the history of Kay Dowling, granddaughter of old Lucius Dowling who owned the L. D. ranch, and the cowboy, Tom McNair. There is little of old Lucius in his son, Henry, Kay's father; and when the L. D. commits the crime of losing money, Henry decides that the ranch must be sold. But in the painful preliminaries to the sale, while a sort of financial autopsy is taking place on the spot, Kay and Tom McNair have met each other and ridden the range together. Herbert, so efficient, quiet and impeccable, so set apart as Kay's future husband, must be held on the whole to have helped rather than to have hindered an association of which he anxiously disapproves.

Separation takes place automatically with the return East of the Dowlings. After some time Kay has an unexpected chance to see her cowboy in her own world—one in which he is completely strange and in which he shows to no great advantage. His appearance is brief and is followed by a return to Herbert, acceptance of Herbert, and all the complex preparations for being married to Herbert. And, as the wedding presents pour in and are catalogued and insured, as gowns are fitted and the country house is made ready, there comes panting to a slow climax the apotheosis of Herbert—nothing passionate, you understand, but a gradual summit of human

perfectibility, already nearly scaled, where one will rest through a serene long life, hand in hand with Herbert in peace and Herbertude.

With the swift action which has the aspect of mad folly—but which is sometimes an anticipation of final wisdom—Kay deserts Herbert for Tom. The rich girl and the cowboy marry, and Mrs. Rinehart rides into the bad lands where most "storytellers" have neither knowledge nor courage to venture.

In judging Western stories it has been necessary for twenty-five years to go back to Owen Wister's "The Virginian" for a standard of comparison. "Lost Ecstasy" came as a sharp notice that even in Mr. Wister's classic the cowboy is sentimentalized. The fact that he was a Virginian, though duly qualifying him as one of nature's noblemen, cannot quite explain the other fact, namely, that "Lost Ecstasy" makes "The Virginian" seem a bit mushy.

Tom McNair is intensely human. Like all egotistic males, he takes his time about falling for a girl. The ranch expression was that he deemed himself "God's gift to women." Tom's customary behavior indicates a faith that women are God's gift to him, and a gift not to be overrated. He is the kind of a fellow who expects a girl to endure hardships with perfect stoicism but who, should she light a cigarette to see her through the grim ordeal, reaches over and takes the cigarette away from her. Tom can bring Kay to a wretched shack with no real comprehension of its misery for her; strive anxiously to make her warm and comfortable; and then, when he sees she is still in discomfort, become a peevish little boy. " 'It's a fine wife I've got. Now if you'd married *Percy*—.' " One can say "Percy" much more poisonously than "Herbert."

Kay has never been blind to Tom's ineligibilities as her husband, but she is pretty well at the mercy of physical attraction, as most girls are. Mrs. Rinehart conveys whole sides of her with simple and significant strokes. All her life Kay had heard her father and mother say good-night:

" 'Good-night, Katherine.'

" 'Good-night, Henry. Don't forget to open your window.' "

It had not escaped Kay that marriage with Herbert would be like that. Herbert was "rather sweet." But he brought nothing to that side of Kay inherited from her grandfather, old Lucius's adventurous courage, his passion for far horizons. Herbert could not exercise in Kay that strange power of women to make a single look or tender gesture compensate for every physical stress. No, Herbert was created for such occasions as the rich display of the wedding gifts, each of which he meticulously recorded. " 'There is a very large sum of money invested here and it requires protection.' " What a pity that Herbert could not take out insurance on the wedding itself, and not merely on the presents.

V

"Lost Ecstasy" is Mrs. Rinehart's best novel. It realizes the ambition she expressed in 1917 when she said: "I am, frankly, a story-teller. Some day I may be a novelist." She did not begin to write particularly early and her first successes and versatility have been somewhat in the nature of stumbling-blocks. Still very much in her prime, there seems to be no reason why she should not surpass everything she has done so far. No other woman novelist numbers anywhere near so many male readers; she does her men exceptionally well, as Kathleen

Norris excels with her women. But on the feminine side Mrs. Rinehart is by no means weak; and her feminine insight is most amusingly shown in "Isn't That Just Like a Man!"—her reply to Irvin S. Cobb's "Oh, Well, You Know How Women Are!" The verdict, where not rendered in accordance with the sex of the reader, is in Mrs. Rinehart's favor.

Like Kathleen Norris and Booth Tarkington, Mrs. Rinehart is so much in demand by the editors of magazines that it has at times seemed to be impossible to carry out her larger plans or give the best she had to give. But, as with Mrs. Norris and Mr. Tarkington, a definite determination has been reached to do only what she most aspires to do, leaving all questions of serial publication, dramatization, filming and so forth to be dealt with when the work is finished. There will then, of course, be a wild scramble but at least it does not take place in the writer's study.

Books by Mary Roberts Rinehart

*** Of first importance
** Of next importance
* Third in importance

1908. *** The Circular Staircase. Mystery novel. (*Bobbs-Merrill.*) *Doran.*
1909. The Man in Lower Ten. Mystery novel. (*Bobbs-Merrill.*) *Doran.*
1909. When a Man Marries. Humorous novel. (*Bobbs-Merrill.*) *Doran.*
1910. The Window at the White Cat. Mystery novel. (*Bobbs-Merrill.*) *Doran.*
1911. *** The Amazing Adventures of Letitia Carberry. Novel. (*Bobbs-Merrill.*) *Doran.*
1912. Where There's a Will. Humorous novel. (*Bobbs-Merrill.*) *Doran.*
1913. The Case of Jenny Brice. Mystery novel. (*Bobbs-Merrill.*) *Doran.*

1914. The After House. Mystery novel. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1914. The Street of Seven Stars. Romantic novel. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1915. Through Glacier Park. Travel. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1915. *** K. Novel. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1915. Kings, Queens and Pawns. Record of war experiences. *Doran.*
1916. * Tish. Short stories. *Doran.*
1917. Bab, a Sub-Deb. Short stories. *Doran.*
1917. The Altar of Freedom. Written when Mrs. Rinehart's son entered military service. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1917. Long Live the King! Romantic novel. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1918. Tenting Tonight. Travel. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1918. ** The Amazing Interlude. War novel. *Doran.*
1919. Twenty-Three and a Half Hours' Leave. Novelette. *Doran.*
1919. Dangerous Days. Novel. *Doran.*
1919. Love Stories. *Doran.*
1920. Affinities and Other Stories. *Doran.*
1920. "Isn't That Just Like a Man!" One-half of the dispute between men and women; in volume with "Oh, Well, You Know How Women Are!" by Irvin S. Cobb. *Doran.*
1920. The Truce of God. Medieval romance. *Doran.*
1920. * A Poor Wise Man. Novel. *Doran.*
1921. Sight Unseen and The Confession. Two novelettes based on the psychology of fear and crime. *Doran.*
1921. More Tish. Short stories. *Doran.*
1922. ** The Breaking Point. Novel. *Doran.*
1923. The Out Trail. Travel. *Doran.*
1924. * Temperamental People. Short stories. *Doran.*
1925. The Red Lamp. Mystery novel. *Doran.*
1926. Nomad's Land. Travel. *Doran.*
1926. Tish Plays the Game. Short stories. *Doran.*
1927. *** Lost Ecstasy. Novel. *Doran.*

Sources on Mary Roberts Rinehart

"Mary Roberts Rinehart: A Sketch of the Woman and Her Work." Booklet published by George H. Doran Company (1922). Includes Mrs. Rinehart's autobiographical article written in 1917, "My Creed," and a short discussion of the detective story.

"My Public," by Mary Roberts Rinehart, *The Bookman*, December, 1920.

ELIZABETH MADOX ROBERTS

It was inevitable that the art of Sherwood Anderson should find its correspondence in the art of some woman novelist. She has appeared in the person of Elizabeth Madox Roberts. There are differences, of course, and they are not in the woman's favor. But that may be because Miss Roberts is a poet, and Mr. Anderson isn't. It is more likely the difference of sex, the inability of any woman to be as resilient in spirit as any man, the tendency of woman to fix on a few aspects of spiritual experience and emphasize them almost to monotony.

For women are still cloistered. Free of the world, the majority of them cloister themselves, in some innermost recess of being. And this something, which is possibly the soul or possibly only a nervous fixation, continually reaches out to touch life, retreating again instantly, reaching out and retreating endlessly. When it is deeply lacerated, poetry sometimes results.

Miss Roberts, a native of Kentucky, published her first book, a volume of poems, in 1922. "The Time of Man," her first novel, appearing in 1926, was acclaimed by Rebecca West, Carl van Doren, Arnold Bennett, Sherwood Anderson, Ford Madox Ford, Henry Seidel Canby, Hugh Walpole, Zona Gale, and the English critic, Edward Garnett—to name the more conspicuous voices in the chorus of praise. It was selected for distribution by one of those book juries on whom some thousands of readers have come to lean. Duly distributed, it was received with the stupefaction to which these audiences were then somewhat less accustomed than they are to-day.

In this slightly arbitrary but wholesome manner, "The

Time of Man" was put in the hands of every man, woman and child who perhaps ought to read it, but was unable to. Such experiments do a certain harm to the spread of a taste for reading, but they are unavoidable. They occur every year with some book which arouses to intensity its proper audience, so that the fuss created by that audience stirs outside indifference to active curiosity. Most of the books of distinction which have become outstanding best-sellers have had their sale above 50,000 copies merely as the result of their having become fashionable.

What is Miss Roberts's novel? It is the story of a migrant family of the tenant farmer, "poor white" class, and particularly of a young girl, Ellen Chesser. It is not told in scenes, for the most part, but in a flowing narrative, a poetic and persuasive prose, in which the homely words and bits of dialogue are dipped as pieces of homespun in butternut juice. It is not an eventful story. Ellen grows up, with her girl's dreams; falls in love and marries, bears children. Her husband escapes a threat of jail; he goes with another woman; accuses her of unfaithfulness; and she is left to bear this child alone. It is a sickly child of whom Jasper becomes very fond; its death brings husband and wife closely together. A long novel, of over 100,000 words. Read any three pages; the rest is all like that.

Very lovely work. The great advantage of Miss Roberts's method was that her narrative flow, with its constant poetic feeling, could carry along smoothly the occasional glimpses into the misery and degradation of this primitive existence. The sensitive reader was aroused to such a condition of awareness that a hint would often suffice; anything like the full horror was never necessary. Yet there was no impression that the author softened anything; it was only that nothing sincere or natural, native or honest, appeared alien in her eyes.

And with unfailing constancy she searched out and showed every aspect of beauty.

It is over the question of beauty that the doubt forms. No one, of course, knows what beauty is, except that it is a form of response. Therefore, when there is talk of readers "responding to the beauty" of a book of this character, the phrase is really one that turns in upon itself, becoming as meaningless as a serpent swallowing his tail. Miss Roberts is a person of great responsiveness and it is probable that everything human has its value in her eyes. These values can sometimes be communicated in the few words of a poem; they are seldom communicable, to many persons, in 100,000 words. Those readers who took "The Time of Man" in little sips, so that it lasted them for months, were wisest.

And now she has published a second novel. "My Heart and My Flesh" (1927) takes title from a line of Scripture running: "My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God." This is the story of Theodosia Bell, who allows the plenitude of life to slip from her faltering fingers.

Theodosia Bell comes of a good Southern family, the daughter of a man who lives loosely, living with her mother and sister in a white-pillared house. She has a joyous childhood. The first blow is her sister's death. Then young men come to court her. Her mother dies and she is left in the house with her father, of whom she sees almost nothing, and her grandfather, of whom she sees far too much—for now the personal care of this helpless old man devolves upon her. Then she makes a staggering discovery: Her father is also the father of three negroes, a slobbering stable boy and two girls whom she knows as laundresses. One by one she loses the young men who might have provided her husband. Her grandfather dies and she forms a habit of visiting

her half-sisters in the negro cabins. Her father goes away and does not come back at all. Theodosia's health breaks; she half loses her mind; and the story of her slow destruction is written with great power. She verges on suicide when the turn comes. Courage is vouchsafed her; she flees the house, taken on her way by a peddler, who drives her to Spring Valley, where there is need of a schoolteacher. There she finds peace and the book's anguish slowly dissolves itself into serenity.

The reader must understand that such a summary as we have given does the novel, and especially a novel of this character, bleak injustice.

Here, evidently, is much more of a story than "The Time of Man" achieved. Whether it will mean more to many readers is doubtful. Few spirits are as lacking in robustness as Theodosia Bell's, and the stronger are little prone to sympathize with the weak. Ellen Chesser and everything about her was subject to a degree of acceptance—none who read the book were of Ellen's sort, nor did many know any one in the least like her. But Theodosia is the sort of girl and woman most readers will feel they know more or less about; she might be an acquaintance or a neighbor; and their judgments will take on a practical tone.

Nor is Miss Roberts's method so well adapted to this material. To take only one example: The care of the infirm old grandfather is highly distasteful to the girl. No doubt youth's abhorrence for the maladies of old age is not over-emphasized. But Miss Roberts writes:

> When a man is a baby some one uncovers his nakedness and bathes it. Then he has a long season of being obscure, withdrawn within himself, alive, secret with life. Finally he is old and again some one must uncover his nakedness and bathe him, handle him as if he were new-

born. She herself had done this for him. Where, she questioned, is his soul?

This is very poetically expressed, but what does it mean? Can it mean that babies have no souls? It seems in some difficult way to associate the soul with decency in male attire; but the idea of any such interpretation is preposterous and will probably be construed as insulting to the author. The truth is, it means nothing. A thought (not new) and a gift for poetic expression have led Miss Roberts astray. Theodosia is questing for the soul of her grandfather and everything she has to do must somehow bear on the quest.

"Life Bared to the Quick in New Novel." "A Moment of Creative Listening." Acutely appreciative reviews of "My Heart and My Flesh" inspire such captions. That is the worst of it. What, in spite of mental slips, can be conceived and carried out in poetic passion by a writer like Miss Roberts, is a dangerous stimulus to some minds. They babble. Perhaps in such fiction as she has given us in these two books there is too much digitalis, of which one drop suffices in a poem, making the heart beat. But in a novel? For all the way through there is one constant sound. It is a heart, beating, beating. . . .

Books by Elizabeth Madox Roberts

1922. Under the Tree. Poems. *Viking Press.*
1926. The Time of Man. *Viking Press.*
1927. My Heart and My Flesh. *Viking Press.*

EMANIE N. SACHS

THE author of "Talk" and "Red Damask" was born Emanie Louise Nahm, in Bowling Green, Kentucky, and was the fourth generation to live there. No one ever went to so many schools. Public school, a private school, a seminary, Belmont College, a finishing school, special university courses, a normal school and a business university. She says laconically, "Never graduated."

She "dabbled in" juvenile court work, woman's club work, painting, dancing, domestic science, school teaching. Coming to New York, she reviewed books and wrote special articles for the *New York Times* for two years. In 1917 she was married to Walter Edward Sachs, banker and member of the firm of Goldman, Sachs & Company. A daughter was born to them and Mrs. Sachs worked with the Women's Municipal League for a year, was actively interested in a bookshop for a year, and studied fiction writing under a professional teacher for four years. After some success with short stories, "Talk" was published in 1924.

It is an acute study of the real relation of public opinion to the individual as typified by a woman who was a lifelong victim of small-town gossip. "Red Damask" (1927) is the story of a wealthy Jewish family and of youth's search for sound standards in a modern world of rather chaotic morals.

As these lines are written a biography of Victoria Claflin Woodhull, the suffragist, by Mrs. Sachs is promised for early publication.

BOOKS BY EMANIE N. SACHS

1924. TALK. *Harper.*
1927. RED DAMASK. *Harper.*

DOROTHY SCARBOROUGH

Work as an instructor and an assistant professor of English at Columbia University, where she has had to do chiefly with teaching in the short story courses, somewhat delayed Dorothy Scarborough's own start as a novelist. But with three novels published, she is well started on what seems to be her best path.

She was born at Mt. Carmel, Texas, the daughter of Judge John B. Scarborough and Mary Adelaide Ellison Scarborough. After her graduation from Baylor University she studied at the University of Chicago and at Oxford, England. She has been a member of the Columbia faculty since 1916.

Her first novel, "In the Land of Cotton" (1923) was a story of Texas farm life. Her next novel was also laid in Texas. This was "The Wind" (1925), brought out anonymously, and attributed to several well-known writers before the authorship was divulged. "Impatient Griselda" (1927) is a close portrayal of the effect of a woman of the Lilith type upon the lives of three other persons.

Books by Dorothy Scarborough

1912. Fugitive Verses. *Baylor University Press.*
1917. The Supernatural in Modern English Fiction. *Putnam.*
1919. From a Southern Porch. Essays. *Putnam.*
1921. Famous Modern Ghost Stories (compiled by Miss Scarborough). *Putnam.*
1921. Humorous Ghost Stories (compiler). *Putnam.*

1923. In the Land of Cotton. Novel. *Macmillan.*
1925. On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs (with O. L. Gulledge). *Harvard University Press.*
1925. The Wind. Novel. *Harper.*
1927. Impatient Griselda. Novel. *Harper.*

EVELYN SCOTT

It is impossible not to feel and respond to the importance of Evelyn Scott's work, however special—however restricted, so far, in its appeal. Undoubtedly the thing for the reader to do, who is totally unacquainted with her work, is first to read her autobiography, "Escapade" (1923), and then perhaps to tackle the first novel, "The Narrow House" (1921). Next he might pick up the latest novel, "Ideals" (1927); and by that time he will have made his own decision.

Evelyn Scott was born in Clarkesville, near Nashville, Tennessee, in 1893. Most of her early youth was spent in New Orleans. She began to write as a child and at fourteen had published some short stories under a pen name—"very bad ones," she says.

At twenty she left the United States, and she and C. Kay Scott lived in Brazil for six years. The story of those years is told in the autobiographical "Escapade" to which H. L. Mencken, Ludwig Lewisohn, Burton Rascoe, Isaac Goldberg, Robert Morss Lovett and other critics gave extraordinary praise.

She had been the youngest pupil ever admitted to Tulane University. She had gone to South America for the sake of a great love. When she came back from those awful years, she published her first book, poetry; and a year later came "The Narrow House," which showed her great emotional intensity and psychological power. At this time or afterward, in addition to the men already named, Sinclair Lewis, Carl Van Doren, and W. E. Woodward did what they could to command attention for her work.

As so often happens, what they could do was not too much—in other words, not nearly so much as such a talent deserved to have in the way of widened recognition.

She is, in the word of Isabel Paterson, "merciless." One does not turn to her work for pleasantness, but for a version of truth. Her quality may be extracted from Mrs. Paterson's review of "Ideals":

. . . It would seem impossible that disgust could serve as the motive power for creative work. But there are Swift and Huysmans—and Evelyn Scott. . . . Mrs. Scott defines her book as "farce and comedy." Well, of course, Gulliver is a nursery classic. These studies are as humorous as a surgical clinic. And, it must be conceded, almost as powerful and as thorough.

Consider "Queenie Abrams," described by her "gentleman friend" as "the finest little woman in the world." Queenie was self-supporting, independent, and therefore prepared to be a "good pal" to a man. She "thanked God she had a sense of humor." She believed that you can always tell a lady by her gloves, shoes and hat. She was a nice girl, and a good woman, but broad-minded. When "Boy" overstepped the prescribed bounds for friendship, she told him he hadn't acted like a gentleman. Queenie is . . . the product of New York, the subway, department stores, delicatessen and apartment house uniformity.

Henry Ellis . . . and his wife, Gertrude, both came of families which had had a little money for a generation and lost it. So they wished to keep alive in the minds of their children "the fine old traditions of American aristocracy." At the same time they avowed allegiance to a "democratic ideal." . . .

Herbert Young, the Young Intellectual, . . . tried to Realize the Absolute through an affair with a casual damsel. The casualness was deliberate; Herbert and his wife Jane were determinedly Free. Jane was aggressively

Not Jealous. She declared she must be fundamentally Unmoral. She had two children, not wishing to "miss the experience." Herbert spoke of maternity as "the art function of woman." . . .

Since Chaucer limned the gentle Prioress Dame Eglantyne, no writer has dealt so freely with a nun in fiction as Mrs. Scott in her portrait of Mother Immaculate Heart and Mother Anna Domini. In this lack of reverence, to be sure, the likeness ends. . . .

One would not wish more power to Mrs. Scott's elbow; she doesn't need it.[1]

Books by Evelyn Scott

1920. Precipitations. Poems. *Nicholas L. Brown.*
1921. The Narrow House. Novel. *Liveright.*
1922. Narcissus. Novel. *Harcourt.*
1923. Escapade. Autobiography. *Seltzer.*
1924. The Golden Door. Novel. *Seltzer.*
1925. In the Endless Sands. For children. *Holt.* Written in collaboration with C. Kay Scott.
1927. Migrations. Novel. *Boni.*
1927. Ideals. Novel. *Boni.*

Mrs. Scott's first play, "Love," was produced at the Provincetown Theatre just before publication of "The Narrow House." She lived in New York little more than a year, and since that time has been abroad, in England, France, Spain, Portugal and North Africa, with a year in Bermuda.

At the time this is written she is at work on a panoramic novel of the Civil War, to be called "The Wave," and she will remain in America until this book is completed.

Sources on Evelyn Scott

"The Roving Critic," by Carl Van Doren. Knopf.

[1] "Five Patterns of Behaviorism," a review of "Ideals," in the book section of the New York *Herald Tribune* for October 23, 1927.

ANNE DOUGLAS SEDGWICK

"THE half-light closed around the hedge and arbor of the English garden," writes Esther Forbes. "The orchard beyond us sharpened into a purple silhouette against the sunset. She sat serene and upright by the tea-table like a Dresden goddess. The coil of prematurely white hair, the purple eyes, the pink and white smoothness of her molded features, lent her a statuesque quality which was sweetly dispelled by her smile and by the gentle irony of her conversation." This was the one among contemporary women novelists who can, on occasion, deal with her characters of the mind most gently but also most thoroughly. Anne Douglas Sedgwick turns her people inside out like gloves—and she does it slowly, delicately, sympathetically, without hurting them, without their splitting along the seams.

Every one thinks of her as the author of "The Little French Girl" and "The Old Countess." But in 1911 and immediately thereafter people thought of her as the author of "Tante." A year earlier some attentive readers had been deeply impressed by "Franklin Winslow Kane." These novels are being re-discovered, and with them, "Adrienne Toner," which came in 1922. These are the major elevations in a topographical survey of her work but the level of altitude is pretty high. The range beyond, as yet unmapped, may go higher still.

II

She was born in 1873 at Englewood, New Jersey, the daughter of George Stanley Sedgwick and Mary Douglas

Sedgwick. As a child of nine she was taken to England.[1] Her recollections of America before nine are dim. Something of New York and of the home at Irvington-on-Hudson remains. "I see a starry scintillating sky on a snowy night, a Christmas tree, and the orchards and gardens where I and my sisters played in summer—but nothing distinctive or typical. Much clearer are the pictures of a visit to southern Ohio, to my mother's family, during the life in England, so very different are they from the pictures of the Middle West that I find in modern American novels. Sobriety, sweetness, tradition are the things that best fit my memories of my grandfather's and grandmother's Ohio home. I spent hours reading in the library. I remember being taken by Grandfather one night to watch by lantern light the emergence from its case of a locust, frail, green, exquisite. An immense and beautiful catalpa tree showered white and pink flowers on the roofs of the verandas. There were dear old negro servants. Then, at fourteen, it was England again."

England meant the London of Gilbert and Sullivan premières, Lily Langtry, buns, muffins, hansom cabs and fogs; also walks with a governess in Rotten Row and frequent visits to the National Gallery and the old South Kensington Museum. In short, "the London that I try to evoke in the first chapter of 'Tante.' "

At eighteen it ceased to be London and became Paris. "I studied painting for five years, never working very hard, I fear, and with no special talent, though I did exhibit a pleasant little portrait of my sister in the Champs de Mars salon." She made her début as an author in 1898, at twenty-five. "I turned to writing

[1] The biographical detail in this chapter is taken from the interview by Esther Forbes. See "Sources on Anne Douglas Sedgwick" at the end of the chapter.

quite by accident. I had always told long, continued stories to my sisters and these developed into novels, and it was one of them, 'The Dull Miss Archinard'—a very feeble little affair that I trust no one will ever wish to re-read—that was shown by my father to a publisher" and thus became her first book. A few years later, when she was twenty-eight, she revisited America for the first time since her childhood, paying two visits of six months each, "seeing America with a foreigner's eyes, perhaps, but with an American heart." She saw (remember this was in 1901) New York, Boston, Washington, southern Ohio again, and "the beautiful New England country." Her main emotions were exhilaration and happiness. She had made American friends before and made more now. "Almost always I find Americans lovable."

Her first novel had been followed a year later by "The Confounding of Camelia." She has continued to produce a book about every other year. "I have very few ideas —perhaps one in two years." The next landmark was her marriage, in 1908, when she was thirty-five, to Basil de Selincourt, of an old English family of French descent. They reside at Far End, Kingham, Oxfordshire.

During the war, Mrs. de Selincourt and her husband worked for three years in a hospital organized by friends of theirs. "I was saturated with France. We have often returned there since the war. My husband and I think France the most beautiful country in the world, but I realize that one may have moments of monotony between Calais and Paris, and Paris and Bordeaux. I have always read a great deal of French and think as easily in French as in English."

Their English home is in the Cotswold country. "I confess that I often waste long moments in watching the birds when I should be working." Mr. de Selincourt is conductor of a choral society of sixty which, aided by an

Oxford orchestra, gives works by Brahms, Haydn and Bach, "and to sing in this great splendor of sound is one of my delights, though I have no voice to speak of."

III

Anne Douglas Sedgwick's novels written before her marriage, the first seven, are stories of quiet English life. "A Fountain Sealed" is the best of these. Nothing in her work can be said to have prepared readers for the appearance of "Franklin Winslow Kane" (1910).

Althea Jakes is an American who spends most of her time in Europe. Franklin Winslow Kane is an inconspicuous young man, "the sort of young man one asked to tea rather than to dinner." He comes of good people and an uncle or somebody has a great deal of money; everything about him is admirable, or at the very least estimable, but it does not impress observers that he has a personality. He probably has none. For fifteen years Franklin has paid suit to Althea who has, every now and then, picked him up and scrutinized him afresh, but who certainly hopes some better and more fascinating marriage awaits her.

Althea runs across Helen Buchanan, of a very good Scottish family, and an accidental acquaintance develops into friendship. Helen has always been in love with Gerald Digby, but that attractive fellow is drawn to Althea. The first climax of the novel is reached in a scene between Franklin and Helen. After a little interchange, Franklin says gently: "I have been crying, too."

After the engagement of Althea and Gerald comes the hardly expected event of a lifetime: Franklin, who has always stood in the shadow of a fortune, inherits it. He becomes actually very rich. This disturbs Althea, who has always had plenty of money but who cannot now help feeling that Franklin has had all along an importance

which she has overlooked. The immediate importance, from Franklin's point of view, lies in the fact that he can be seriously considered by Helen as a husband. It should perhaps here be explained that Helen is in no sense a mercenary person; singularly honest, she has the directness, force and character of the aristocrat by birth. Beside her Althea is a synthetic product of carefully glued conventions and attitudes.

The engagement of Helen and Franklin is the signal for panic in the other camp. Gerald rushes to Helen and reproaches her, until she turns on him. Enough has been told to give the nature of the novel, the action of which continues beyond this point.

Few novelists have contrived to say so much in a book, and say it so clearly, without stepping outside the frame of story. Mrs. de Selincourt does that not at all; simple depiction is all her art. Yet by putting these four persons accurately before us she makes it apparent that Franklin and Helen have stuff in them which Gerald and Althea haven't. She says that physical attraction is a dubious substitute for wearing qualities though even sensible women prefer it. She lets us understand that Franklin and Helen would be happy together because each knew how to value the other. Most significantly of all, she declines, as too easy, the ending most novelists would have made, the engagement of Helen and Franklin, with some slight moral discomfiture for Althea and Gerald.

Handicapped by its title—many supposed it a biography of some worthy of whom they ought to have heard but whom they couldn't bother about now—and with no sensational element, "Franklin Winslow Kane" set on fire neither the Thames nor the Hudson. Yet fifteen years later, and after the publication of "The Little French Girl," the novelist Hugh Walpole was to call it "the best of all Mrs. de Selincourt's books, a good deal better than

this last successful one. It enshrines a character who is never betrayed by sentimentality, who is gentle without being effeminate and brave without being arrogant. He will be passed on from friend to friend and handed down as a living witness of what the twentieth century could produce in the way of gentlemen when it was put to it."

The great artist in the fullness of her egocentricity formed the subject of Mrs. de Selincourt's next novel. "Tante" (1911) had that sensational element which "Franklin Winslow Kane" had been without and which is unfortunately often necessary to catch the public eye and ear. The figure of Mercedes Okraska was rumored to have been built up in part from the singer, Adelina Patti, and in part from the pianist, Teresa Carreño. It probably derived only inessentials from either. Afterward Ethel Barrymore contributed her ability as an actress to the play made from the book.

"The heroine, when the story opens, is forty-eight years old, the most famous of living pianists, and the most beautiful of women," says a description by Heloise E. Hersey. "The opening scene, a brilliant piece of writing, shows her in triumph at a great London concert. She enthralls the multitude, but one listener, Gregory Jardine, discerns that time has wrought a baleful change in the art of Madame Okraska. It is inspiration no longer; it is the memory of inspiration.

"At this same concert Jardine observes the other woman who is to play a great part in the drama now opening. She is young, and as the ward of Madame Okraska has been given the privilege of calling her 'Tante.'[2] As a child she had been literally picked up, hungry and lost. Karen Woodruff's mother had been a Norwegian and her father an American sculptor. Both had died, and Karen had run away from the lonely misery

[2] "Aunt" both in French and German.

of a convent school. From the moment when she was found, the child's whole heart was given to her benefactress. Her affection knows no stint. She can see no faults in the beautiful pianist. Moods of indifference or self-indulgence or even cruelty are only marks of genius to Karen.

"Karen is the product of Tante's influence. Once married to Jardine, whom she deeply loves, it might be supposed that she would free herself. But the shackles still hold her. A sharp issue occurs at last between the strong, silent, conservative young English husband and the selfish, willful, Bohemian pianist. The conflict goes far beyond a personal one and develops into a description of an age-old struggle between a sane, organized society and the license and selfish individualism of a so-called bohemia. It is very cleverly studied. The author leaves us in no doubt where she stands. She believes in 'the supreme value of a rooted life.' She believes that 'a social system of harmonious people, significant, perhaps, more because of their places in the system than as units, and bound together by a highly evolved code, is, when all is said and done, a more satisfactory place in which to spend one's life than an anarchic world of erratic, undisciplined, independent individuals.'

"The subject of the last third of the novel is the attempted alienation of Karen from her husband by the wicked contrivances of Tante."

One is inclined to think Miss Hersey has done as well as can be done; "Tante" cannot be adequately outlined. It is too substantial, too circumstantial in its invention, too smooth in texture, too much a matter of delicate detail; above all, too finely dramatic. The tension which is set up when Gregory Jardine marries Karen, one-third of the way in the book, never slackens for an instant; and when the duel between Gregory and Okraska be-

comes desperate there is no choice but to read on and on and on, no matter how long past the hour of midnight.

Of all the novels in English which study a temperament none will be found to surpass "Tante"; as a piece of characterization it stands very high because it is all realized in scenes and action. The revelation of Madame Okraska's nature does not come suddenly and it is consistently maintained throughout the 437 pages. Mrs. de Selincourt has given us nothing better.

IV

"Adrienne Toner" (1922) dealt with an American as its author had not dealt with one since "Franklin Winslow Kane." The heroine is observed through the eyes and mind of a man who begins by hating her and who is from the outset her passive enemy. To Oldmeadow, Adrienne is a fake—a hypocritical apostle of "sweetness and light" with a most alarming power over other young people to whom he is sincerely attached. As he sees this girl she has come between those approaching lovers, Nancy and Barney; has married Barney and, in so doing, has blackened Nancy's life. As if this were not mischief enough, Adrienne becomes responsible for Barney's younger sister running away with a lover on the ground that love must not be a furtive thing. Far too hostile toward this American to be cynical about her, Oldmeadow, though by nature no man of action, springs into open warfare.

The rest of the story is a *tour de force* such as perhaps no other living novelist would essay, much less achieve. It effects a complete revolution in Oldmeadow's attitude. From hating Adrienne—and not at all as a person, as a foe to society—he comes to love her; and from wishing she might fall dead he lives to suffer a desolation of loss when she cannot accept his devotion. This cannot be made credible in any description and for some readers it

may lack thoroughgoing credibility in the pages of the novel. It is fair to add that Adrienne herself undergoes great changes; the meeting of these foes as friends, and more than friends, is to some extent a meeting halfway.

Some readers remain unconvinced. But again we have to observe Mrs. de Selincourt's extraordinary power in the consistent disclosure of character. Incident by incident, scene by scene she proceeds to set Adrienne before us. There is no smack of contrivance, nothing feels "managed." Nor is anything skipped. This author writes very closely, painting with delicate care and avoiding no detail. But she is never tedious; she includes nothing that is not welcome as an accretion to our knowledge. People who have tried to "read down the middle" of her pages have not fared well and have gone back to re-read at a slower tempo.

The title, the presence of a charming young heroine, and the best "situation" Anne Douglas Sedgwick had had all conspire to make "The Little French Girl" (1924) her most popular novel. Only the situation need be recounted. Madame Vervier has become a woman of many lovers. Her indiscretions have rendered it impossible that her daughter should make a suitable marriage in France. She snatches at an opportunity to send Alix to England, ostensibly to finish her education but really on the chance that social connections there may solve the problem of the girl's future. The mother's cruel daring permits Alix to go into the family of a young English officer who had been killed in the war after being for a time Madame Vervier's lover. We meet the little French girl in the gloom and fog and tumult of the Victoria Station in London, waiting for some member of the family of Captain Owen and facing dangers and entanglements unguessed.

Other novels have studied the contrasts of French and

English society, of Latin and "Anglo-Saxon" morality; none has surpassed "The Little French Girl" in so doing. William Lyon Phelps finds as a solitary flaw that Mrs. de Selincourt has made Alix too wise, too much of a paragon. "No novel with a flawless heroine has ever been flawless," he protests. It is a point. Such is the author's skill that the point is rather one of reflection afterward than of fault found while reading.

"The Old Countess" (1927) is laid in France. Dick Graham is a painter. He and his wife, Jill, are spending a part of each year in Buissac, on the Dordogne River. They are very young, completely happy, and have delicious times together. The old Countess, Madame de Lamouderie, who lives hard by, has a protégée, Marthe Luderac, with whom Dick falls madly in love. Madame de Lamouderie, at first a sort of chorus in the Greek tragedy now beginning, becomes in the end in some measure an instrument of destiny.

Mrs. de Selincourt is unsparingly honest. She wishes to show what happens when physical infatuation conquers an otherwise decent man and she wishes to show it under "ideal" conditions. Both Jill and Marthe are persons of beauty, force and noble character. Yet both are very nearly helpless. There can be no happy ending for such a tale but the author does what she can to mitigate the horror. The drama of three is brought to a close and a short epilogue offers us a glimpse of two of the actors a couple of years afterward. It is the only unconvincing scene in the book; but this is partly because, as readers, we are still under the strong convictions that the story has established, and the flutter of another page cannot take us out of them, cannot cause two slow-healing years to pass for us.

Any murmur over the flawlessness of Alix in "The Little French Girl" swells to a loud outcry after reading

"The Old Countess." Are not both Marthe and Jill too good to be true? Assuredly, they are too good to be true in a novel, where our demand for plausibility can be insisted upon, no matter how little life heeds it. The answer is already given in our word about "ideal" conditions. Only by making Jill and Marthe examples of perfection can Mrs. de Selincourt show clearly the absolute insanity of such a state as Dick's. She wishes us to see it for exactly what it is—madness—an incurable condition that a civilized society can only cover up with brave appearances. It is useless to condemn Dick—one might as well condemn a victim of cholera or an animal in heat. What interests Mrs. de Selincourt is the civilized way of dealing with such a disaster. She is on the side of the brave appearances where they are coupled with a complete honesty in facing fact. The perfection of Jill and Marthe, besides enabling us to perceive Dick's malady justly, is also offered us as a criterion of behavior, no doubt. But these social and ethical considerations are never obtruded in the book; Anne Douglas Sedgwick is far too good a novelist for that.

In short stories her art is less sure. The title story of "Christmas Roses" (1920) does not avoid sentimentality and its counsels of perfection are not so quietly implicit. She is perhaps seen at her poorest in "Hepaticas," in the same volume, and at her best in "Carnations," some pages further on. "Carnations" has a robustness rare in her novels (except "Tante") and the case of the wife against the errant husband has never been better stated. It comes, quite implausibly (but how refreshingly! like a cold shower bath on a sultry day) from the lips of the other woman.

V

"I can't think of any rule in regard to novel-writing," Mrs. de Selincourt said. in conversation with Esther

Forbes. "Life—more abundant life—is all that one can ask of a novel." She likes best in a novelist what she calls "security of outlook." "A novel should have this security and be sober and beautiful if possible. I care very much for form and unity. And a novel should not be sentimental or affected or dull."

The "security" she praises she has not further defined except by the evidences of her own work. Perhaps we may define it as a spiritual adequacy to the matter in hand. Then of all our living novelists, none, we can safely declare, is more secure.

Books by Anne Douglas Sedgwick

*** Of first importance
** Of second importance
* Third in importance

1898. The Dull Miss Archinard. Novel. *Century.*
1899. The Confounding of Camelia. Novel. *Century.*
1902. The Rescue. Novel. *Century.*
1904. Paths of Judgment. Novel. *Century.*
1906. The Shadow of Life. Novel. *Century.*
1907. * A Fountain Sealed (in England: Valerie Upton). Novel. *Century. Houghton Mifflin.*
1908. Amabel Channice. Novel. *Century.*
1910. *** Franklin Winslow Kane. Novel. *Century. Houghton Mifflin.*
1911. *** Tante. Novel. *Century. Houghton Mifflin.*
1912. The Nest. Short stories. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1914. The Encounter. Novel. Deals with the opposition of Nietzschean and Christian ideals.
1918. * A Childhood in Brittany Eighty Years Ago. Based on memoirs. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1920. ** Christmas Roses (in England under the title of another story, Autumn Crocuses). Short stories. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1920. The Third Window. Novelette. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1922. *** Adrienne Toner. Novel. *Houghton Mifflin.*

1924. *** The Little French Girl. Novel. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1927. *** The Old Countess. Novel. *Houghton Mifflin.*

Sources on Anne Douglas Sedgwick

"Anne Douglas Sedgwick." Booklet published (1927) by Houghton Mifflin Company and containing the only interview she has granted, given to Esther Forbes.

"The Realistic Art of Anne Douglas Sedgwick," by Heloise E. Hersey. First page, book section, Boston *Evening Transcript* for August 30, 1924.

"The New American Type," by Henry Dwight Sedgwick.

ELSIE SINGMASTER

Most readers of the magazines are familiar with the stories of Elsie Singmaster; the audience of her novels grows more slowly. It can never be large while she continues to write chiefly about characters so unknown to the greater number of novel readers. Moreover the humor frequently present in her short stories is rarer in the novels; and her style appears still more methodical and restrained.

"Bennett Malin" (1922) deals with a handsome man, sublimely self-conceited and humorless, who marries a girl to keep his house and devotes his life to trying to write. Greatly tempted, he publishes as his own an exceptionally good poem found among the papers of a dead uncle. The story is finely conceived but the execution is without warmth. Hardly a character comes to life, except Bennett Malin, who is so unusual as to produce an effect of incredibility throughout.

"Keller's Anna Ruth" (1926) is a Cinderella tale of the Pennsylvania Germans. Unfortunately Anna Ruth's sweetheart goes off to Peru early in the story and remains shadowy. Repeated descriptions of Peruvian scenery, though of poetic beauty, affect the reader less than they do the starved imagination of Anna Ruth. The material does not justify more than a novelette.

Elsie Singmaster was born in Schuylkill Haven, Pennsylvania, in 1879, the daughter of the Rev. John Alden Singmaster and Caroline Hoopes Singmaster. Her great-great-great grandfather was the first Lutheran minister ordained in America. She grew up in Allentown, Pennsylvania—the "Millertown" of many of her stories—and

was educated at Cornell University and Radcliffe College. Magazines began accepting her short stories while she was still in college, in 1905. She was married in 1912 to Harold Lewars, who died in 1915. She lives on Seminary Ridge, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, on the battlefield of the Civil War. Frequently she picks up bullets while working in her garden.

Books by Elsie Singmaster

1909. When Sarah Saved the Day. For children. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1910. When Sarah Went to School. For children. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1913. Gettysburg: Stories of the Red Harvest and the Aftermath. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1915. Katy Gaumer. Novel. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1916. Emmeline. For children. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1917. The Long Journey. For children. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1917. Life of Martin Luther. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1917. History of Lutheran Missions.
1920. Basil Everman. Novel. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1920. John Baring's House. For children. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1921. Ellen Levis. Novel. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1922. Bennett Malin. Novel. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1923. The Hidden Road. Novel. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1924. A Boy at Gettysburg. For children. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1925. Bred in the Bone. Short stories. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1926. Keller's Anna Ruth. Novel. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1926. The Story of the Constitution for Young People. *Doran.*
1927. "Sewing Susie." For children. *Houghton Mifflin.*

Sources on Elsie Singmaster

"A Literary Pilgrimage to Elsie Singmaster," by Esther Forbes. Front page, book section, Boston *Evening Transcript* for July 3, 1926. An article of more than ordinary excellence.

GENE STRATTON-PORTER

THE tendency to become statistical, in speaking of the late Gene Stratton-Porter, is difficult to resist. We may as well indulge it to the extent of saying that at the time of her death, December 6, 1924, more than 10,000,000 copies of her books had been sold. Four posthumous books, two novels, a collection of nature studies and a book of essays, are not in the reckoning. A check for $75,000 represented the advance sale[1] on one of her novels; her later novels were bought for serial publication in magazines; and altogether it seems reasonable to estimate her earnings at $2,000,000 in a productive period of twenty years, and about twenty books. It is probably a record among the authors of our day.

Her distinction lay not in this, but in the amazing influence of her writing. No one did more to promote widespread interest in nature study and not even Mr. Harold Bell Wright can be credited with a stronger moral effect. Marked freshness and vigor of feeling, unmistakable sincerity and a very limited sense of humor were the qualities of Mrs. Porter's fiction. To the millions who read her with ardor she was never absurd and not infrequently they found her deeply moving.

Gene Stratton-Porter was born in 1868 on a farm in Wabash County, Indiana, the youngest child of Mark Stratton and his wife, who was of Holland descent. At eighteen she was married to Charles Darwin Porter, of Wabash, Indiana. She spent most of her life in the region

[1] Publishers sell a book to booksellers in advance of its publication, the booksellers buying only so many copies as they are pretty confident of selling, since in most cases the publishers bar the return of unsold copies.

she made famous, near the Limberlost Swamp; one addressed her at Limberlost Cabin, Rome City, Indiana; but her later years were spent in California.

She was thirty-five when her first book was published, and nearly forty before she had her audience—for "Freckles" took three years to achieve its success. Her autobiography, written about 1914, has never been published in full. Judging from the extracts in a booklet first published in 1915, it might be quite the equal in egoism of that of Edward Bok. But, as both illustrate, Dutch blood lacks nothing in courage and persistence.

Books by Gene Stratton-Porter

1903. The Song of the Cardinal. Technically classed as fiction. *Doubleday.*
1904. Freckles. Novel. *Doubleday.*
1907. What I Have Done With Birds (republished, 1917, as Friends in Feathers). Nature book. *Doubleday.*
1907. At the Foot of the Rainbow. Novel. *Doubleday.*
1909. A Girl of the Limberlost. Novel. *Doubleday.*
1909. Birds of the Bible.
1910. Music of the Wild. Nature book. *Doubleday.*
1911. The Harvester. Novel. *Doubleday.*
1912. Moths of the Limberlost. Nature book. *Doubleday.*
1913. Laddie. Novel. *Doubleday.*
1915. Michael O'Halloran. Novel. *Doubleday.*
1916. Morning Face. For children. *Doubleday.*
1918. A Daughter of the Land. Novel. *Doubleday.*
1919. Homing With the Birds. Nature book. *Doubleday.*
1921. Her Father's Daughter. Novel. *Doubleday.*
1922. The Fire Bird. Narrative poem. *Doubleday.*
1923. The White Flag. Novel. *Doubleday.*
1923. Jesus of the Emerald. Narrative poem. *Doubleday.*
1925. Tales You Won't Believe. Nature book. *Doubleday.*
1925. The Keeper of the Bees. Novel. *Doubleday.*

1927. The Magic Garden. Novel. *Doubleday.*
1927. Let Us Highly Resolve. Essays. *Doubleday.*

Sources on Gene Stratton-Porter

"Gene Stratton-Porter: A Little Story of the Life and Work and Ideals of 'The Bird Woman.'" Booklet first published in 1915 and republished in 1926 by Doubleday, Page & Company. This contains the published portions of her autobiography.

"Naturalist vs. Novelist: Gene Stratton-Porter," a chapter in "American Nights Entertainment," by Grant Overton. This chapter republished in "Authors of the Day," by Grant Overton (Doran) pages 144-166. An attempt to explain Mrs. Porter in terms of her early and intense admiration of her father.

"An American Bird-Woman." Unsigned article in *Chambers's Journal* (London and Edinburgh. New York: International News Company), Part 46, October 1, 1914, page 636.

DEMETRA VAKA

It is possible that her sixth novel, a study in contrasting civilizations, showing a group of Americans in the midst of Greek aristocrats in Turkey, may give Demetra Vaka an importance as a novelist equal to her importance as a chronicler and journalist. At the time of writing this chapter she is a novelist only secondarily. A life of the Greek statesman, Venizelos, on which she has been working for six or seven years, and which promises to be one of the outstanding biographies of the decade, brings down the scale rather heavily on the side of non-fiction.

The somewhat romantic circumstances of her early life, however, add, when known, to the enjoyment of her fiction—and, of course, authenticate her work.

She is a Greek, of a Greek family which has lived in Constantinople for the last seven hundred years, often on amicable terms with the ruling Turks. Demetra Vaka's own nurse was a Turkish woman and Turkish children were her playmates. At seventeen, to escape the inevitably prearranged marriage, she came to America as a sort of companion and governess in the family of a Greek who was Turkish consul-general in New York. He was recalled, but she decided to remain in America.

Quite alone, and nearly penniless, she got work on the Greek newspaper, *Atlantis*. She had been educated privately and at convents in Paris. She had taken courses at the Sorbonne in Paris and had had a year at the University of Athens. Finding that she was learning no English, she became teacher of French in a private school.

In 1901, six years after her arrival in America, she returned to Turkey. The friends of her girlhood, now married women, invited her to their homes, and equipped with a new point of view she entered Turkish harems as a welcome visitor from whom there need be no secrets. This experience was to result, eight years later, in ten studies of Turkish women. "Haremlik," the title of the book, means "the place of the harem."

She returned to America and to teaching. In 1904 she was married to Kenneth Brown, himself a writer. He gave her the continuous encouragement and professional assistance necessary if she were to do books in English. Her first book, written in collaboration with her husband, was a novel, "The First Secretary" (1907). Two years later "Haremlik" attracted wide attention.

Her five novels are somewhat on the order of F. Marion Crawford romance—perhaps rather more melodramatic. All except one, "The Duke's Price," contain Greek or Turkish characters and are laid against the Eastern background. "The Duke's Price" is the story of an American girl who exchanged her freedom for a French title.

Of her non-fiction, three books may be considered as forming a trilogy exhibiting forty years of Turkish life. "A Child of the Orient" (1914) is the story of Demetra Vaka's own childhood. "Haremlik" (1909) reports things seen and heard in 1901. "The Unveiled Ladies of Stamboul" (1923) is a picture of the emancipated, or relatively emancipated, Turkish women of to-day.

"The Heart of the Balkans" (1917) is an account of the people of Albania, Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Greece, the result of a tour of those countries, mostly on muleback and with the nights spent in homes by the roadside. "In the Heart of German Intrigue" (1918), built up from interviews with Lloyd George, King Constantine of Greece, Venizelos and many others, is an exposé of

diplomatic and political action in and about Greece during the World War.

Demetra Kenneth Brown (Demetra Vaka) was born in 1877 on the island of Bouyouk Ada (Prinkipo) in the Sea of Marmora. Mrs. Brown and her husband live at Dublin, New Hampshire, although winters are usually spent in Virginia—when they are in America.

Books by Demetra Vaka

1907. The First Secretary (with Kenneth Brown, her husband). Novel. *Dodge.*
1909. Haremlik: Some Pages from the Life of Turkish Women. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1910. The Duke's Price (with Kenneth Brown). Novel. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1910. Finella in Fairyland. For children. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1911. In the Shadow of Islam. Novel. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1914. A Child of the Orient. Autobiographical. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1916. The Grasp of the Sultan. Novel, first published anonymously. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1917. The Heart of the Balkans. Travel. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1918. In the Heart of German Intrigue. World War politics. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1919. A Pawn to a Throne (with Kenneth Brown). Novel. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1923. The Unveiled Ladies of Stamboul. *Houghton Mifflin.*

Sources on Demetra Vaka

"Demetra Vaka Opens the Portals of the Orient," by Dale Warren. Front page of the book section of the Boston *Evening Transcript* for May 28, 1927.

MARY HEATON VORSE

THE reputation of Mary Heaton Vorse as a writer derives from her short stories and from one novel. The novel, "The Prestons," was made from a series of short stories, but was much better fused than novels so made are likely to be. In veracity, sympathetic insight and humor "The Prestons" compares most favorably with "Penrod" and other work by Booth Tarkington; and like a good deal of Tarkington it is a picture of a thoroughly representative American family. Both in material and handling Mary Heaton Vorse's other stories often fall into the class of Wilbur Daniel Steele's.

She was born in New York, Mary Marvin Heaton, the daughter of Hiram Heaton and Ellen Cordelia Blackman Heaton. She was married to Albert White Vorse in 1898; to Joseph O'Brien in 1912; and to Robert Minor in 1920. Her home is in Provincetown, Massachusetts.

BOOKS BY MARY HEATON VORSE

1908. THE BREAKING-IN OF A YACHTSMAN'S WIFE.
1911. THE VERY LITTLE PERSON.
1911. THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN ELDERLY WOMAN.
1913. THE HEART'S COUNTRY.
THE NINTH MAN.
1918. THE PRESTONS. *Liveright.*
1919. I'VE COME TO STAY.
1920. GROWING UP.
1921. MEN AND STEEL.
1923. FRAYCAR'S FIST. *Liveright.*

MARY E. WALLER

THE author of "The Wood-Carver of 'Lympus" has always made a virtue of shunning publicity, but in spite of her seclusion, a few facts are known. Born in Boston. Middle name, Ella. Traveled and studied abroad, taught in a private school in New York and later established and maintained for five years a school for girls in Chicago. Her family had been in Vermont for four generations and until she moved to the island of Nantucket, Miss Waller spent much of her time with her mother in the Vermont mountains.

"The Wood-Carver of 'Lympus" (1904) is one of those occasional books which find their own public, at first slowly, but which continue to sell for many years. Laid in the Green Mountains, it is the story of an ambitious farmer, crippled in early manhood, who finds interests in the outside world through a chance acquaintance and becomes a wood-carver of renown. None of Miss Waller's other stories has shown so much vitality.

BOOKS BY MARY E. WALLER

1902. LITTLE CITIZENS. Story of New York street gamins. *Lothrop.*
1903. A DAUGHTER OF THE RICH. For girls of ten and upward. *Little, Brown.*
1904. THE WOOD-CARVER OF 'LYMPUS. *Little, Brown.*
1905. SANNA OF THE ISLAND TOWN. *Little, Brown.*
1906. THROUGH THE GATES OF THE NETHERLANDS. Travel book. *Little, Brown.*
1909. A YEAR OUT OF LIFE. German travels. *Little, Brown.*
1909. OUR BENNY. Narrative poem. *Little, Brown.*
1910. FLAMSTED QUARRIES. *Little, Brown.*

1911. My Ragpicker. *Little, Brown.*
1912. A Cry in the Wilderness. *Little, Brown.*
1913. Aunt Dorcas's Change of Heart. Published by the author.
1914. From an Island Outpost. Meditative essays. *Little, Brown.*
1918. Out of the Silences. *Little, Brown.*

MARY S. WATTS

LITERARY relationships are sometimes plain but are seldom acknowledged. It is probably the dear wish of every author to think, and to have it thought, that he owes as little as possible to any other writer. Mary S. Watts is an exception. Ten years ago, and after she was established with her public, she said frankly that Thackeray and Defoe had been her masters.

She began her attempts at writing by imitating Stevenson at a time when "everybody used strenuously to imitate him." But after a little "it became manifest to me that the thing to do was not to muddle around with romance, ancient or modern, but to write about people, and to 'lie like the truth.' I remember reading Thackeray, and being struck with the profitable use of the conversational style, as conversation is carried on between persons in good society. But what puzzled me was that there were occasional passages, of considerable extent, wherein Thackeray was not conversational at all; he was writing like somebody else, but it still had the most amazing verisimilitude; it was so plausible that you believed it just as you believe the morning paper.

"After a while, in a moment of illumination, I found him out; the man he was modeling upon was Daniel Defoe; that's where he got that simplicity which did not hesitate at times to be prosy, well aware that a plain, true narrative has always the defect of its quality, monotony, repetition, a tedious dwelling on detail.

"There is nothing in fiction better imagined or imagined with more veracity than the pitiful importance which his efforts at braiding baskets and making pottery vessels

assume to the castaway Robinson Crusoe in his solitude, and yet it is not vividly interesting reading. There is nothing—also—better imagined than George Warrington's escape from Fort Duquesne, with the help of the Indian squaw; but it is rather tiresome, on the whole; and the final touch where the poor squaw, instead of turning out a lovely, romantic Pocahontas, becomes a perfect nuisance when they reach the settlements, getting drunk and creating scandal—that is a masterpiece of realism, and we all hate to know about it.

"Re-reading Defoe, and reading Thackeray more carefully, with side excursions into Swift and Thomas Hardy, it seemed to me that I might eventually learn the trick. I take it that I have succeeded once or twice by the fact that nobody will believe that I have invented a single person or incident."

II

Mary (Stanbery) Watts was born in 1868 on a farm in central Ohio, the daughter of John Rathbone Stanbery and Anna Martin Stanbery. She was educated at the Convent of the Sacred Heart, Clifton, Cincinnati, 1881-84, and was married to Miles Taylor Watts, of Cincinnati, in 1891. Her first novel appeared in 1908 and two years later came the great success of "Nathan Burke." The time of the novel is the 1840's and the hero is a soldier in the Mexican War. The close of "The Legacy" (1911) where Letty Breen asks herself: "Am *I* a good woman—a bad woman?" and then answers, "I do not know," foreshadows "The Rise of Jennie Cushing" (1914), generally considered Mrs. Watts's ablest book, and worth comparing with such novels as David Graham Phillips's "The Fall and Rise of Susan Lennox" and Theodore Dreiser's "Jennie Gerhardt."

Books by Mary S. Watts

*** Of first importance
** Of next importance
* Third in importance

1908. The Tenants. *McClure. Macmillan.*
1910. *** Nathan Burke. *Macmillan.*
1911. * The Legacy. *Macmillan.*
1913. ** Van Cleve: His Friends and His Family. *Macmillan.*
1914. *** The Rise of Jennie Cushing. *Macmillan.*
1916. The Rudder. *Macmillan.*
1917. Three Short Plays. *Macmillan.*
1918. The Boardman Family. *Macmillan.*
1919. From Father to Son. *Macmillan.*
1920. The Noon Mark. *Macmillan.*
1922. The House of Rimmon. *Macmillan.*
1923. Luther Nichols. *Macmillan.*
1924. The Fabric of the Loom. *Macmillan.*

EDITH WHARTON

No American writer of our time has so baffled the critics as Edith Wharton. In the early part of her career, when the brilliance of her writing excited strong praise, there was discomfort over the morality of the persons and scenes she presented. In these latter years voices have been heard complaining because her characters so often are not red-blooded Americans. "God made them, therefore let them pass for men and women," piously exclaims Professor Percy H. Boynton, of the University of Chicago. On the other hand, Katharine Fullerton Gerould, whose stories are stamped with the same influences as Mrs. Wharton's, is glad that Mrs. Wharton writes almost exclusively of social aristocrats; "let us hope that she never will abandon them."

Mrs. Wharton herself has generally remained silent, although once, in 1914, in an essay on "The Criticism of Fiction," she made clear her poor opinion of her critics, delicately comparing them to sea squirts. "The ascidian criticizes the irritation to which it reacts, but its rudimentary contractions are not varied by the nature of the irritating agent. And it is hardly too much to say that English-speaking criticism is in the ascidian stage and throws out or retracts its blind feelers with the same indiscrimination of movement."

In the same essay Mrs. Wharton adopts the point of view of the Italian philosopher, Benedetto Croce, in regard to esthetic judgments. This is that the critic has the right to ask only two questions: "What has the author (or painter, sculptor, etc.) tried to present? How far has he succeeded?" The answers to these questions, ac-

cording to the critic's intelligence and honesty, are all that is proper.

It should be obvious to any one who has read much of her work that Edith Wharton has not tried to present exclusively moral persons nor virile Americans nor social aristocrats. On the other hand she has constantly dealt with moral problems, the customs and manners of Americans and Europeans, and with conflicts between the eternal passions and social codes. She has never hesitated to be frank; but subtleties have not been lost on her. Beginning under the influence of Henry James, she has carried his message to the people. Jane Austen, George Eliot, Thackeray, Hawthorne, George Meredith were her forerunners, as they were Henry James's. She is our only contemporary link in the main chain of the English novel, as perhaps only Hardy and Galsworthy are in England itself.

II

She was born in New York in 1862, Edith Newbold Jones, the daughter of George Frederic Jones and Lucretia Stevens Rhinelander Jones. A great-grandfather, Ebenezer Stevens, was a general in the Revolutionary War. The New York society depicted in "The Age of Innocence" was that which she knew as a child and young woman. All her education was at the hands of private tutors and a good deal of her childhood and youth were spent in Europe, where the family lived at one time for five years without coming home. She learned French, German and Italian as a child. When in America the family spent its summers at Newport, in a house on the bay, halfway out toward Fort Adams.

In 1885 she was married to Edward Wharton, of Boston. They lived in New York, Newport, Lenox and abroad. The first thing of Edith Wharton's to be published appears to have been a sonnet, "Happiness," in

Scribner's for December, 1889. Her first story, "Mrs. Manstey's View," was in the same magazine, July, 1891. Her first book, a collection of stories, "The Greater Inclination," appeared in 1899. After the publication of the collection called "Crucial Instances" (1901) Mrs. Cadwalader Jones, a sister-in-law, sent Mrs. Wharton's stories to Henry James, who praised them and expressed a desire to "get hold of the little lady and pump the pure essence of my wisdom and experience into her." This was the beginning of an important literary friendship.

Since 1906 Mrs. Wharton has made her home in France; in the summer near Paris, at St. Brice, and in the winter at Hyeres, Provence.

During the World War Mrs. Wharton gave herself to relief work in France. Among other activities she took entire charge of 600 Belgian children, refugees from orphanages. The French made her an officer of the Legion of Honor and Belgium decorated her. After the war, and by invitation of the French Government, she visited Africa with General Lyautey, afterward writing her book, "In Morocco," published in 1920.

III

Mrs. Wharton's novels, our main concern, are as follows:

"The Valley of Decision" (1902)
"The House of Mirth" (1905)
"The Fruit of the Tree" (1907)
"The Reef" (1912)
"The Custom of the Country" (1913)
"Summer" (1917)
"The Age of Innocence" (1920)
"The Glimpses of the Moon" (1922)
"A Son at the Front" (1923)

"The Mother's Recompense" (1925)
"Twilight Sleep" (1927)

The first of these is a long historical novel which has been frequently compared with George Eliot's "Romola." The scene is Italy and the time is the eighteenth century. "Odo Valsecca, of a noble Italian house, shares in all the intellectual and political aspirations of the time. His love of Fulvia Vivaldi is frustrated for a time by his accession to the ducal throne of Pianura, and a marriage of state, but she eventually returns to him, to die in a popular uprising by a bullet destined for Odo." To continue Mr. Robert Morss Lovett's description: "We recognize the figures. There are the gentleman in powdered wig and his lady in mask and domino, accompanied by her *cicisbeo;* the little abbe sidling discreetly past, the nun who, dressed as a cavalier, will meet him at the foot of the statue of Colleoni; Columbine and Harlequin, the friar, the lawyer and the peasant; there are coaches, chairs, cards, masquerades, pet monkeys, apartments decorated with baroque stucco work, and terraced gardens with paths leading to statues and box trees cut into fantastic shapes."

Estimates of "The Valley of Decision," are far apart. To critics like Helen Thomas Follett and Wilson Follett it is a significant affair, an epitome of national history, like Joseph Conrad's "Nostromo"; and they find in it all sorts of details apposite to the life of America in the last hundred years. Agreement is general that on the historical side Mrs. Wharton surpassed "Romola" and quite equaled Flaubert's "Salammbô." "All that is lacking," comments Mr. Lovett, "is that touch of poetic imagination which vivifies and animates." The execution of this ambitious work was important to Mrs. Wharton, as proving what she could do on a full-sized canvas; but she wisely turned in other directions in her subsequent novels.

Her second, "The House of Mirth," was a sensation and a best-seller; even now, and despite "The Age of Innocence," it is probably the book for which she is most widely remembered. The story of Lily Bart has been described as "the tragedy of the woman who is a little too weak to do without money and what it buys, or to earn it for herself, and a little too good to sell herself." Lily is real, a person of great charm with a wrong moral attitude; but "real enough to suggest that she could have changed it." She tries to exploit herself in fashionable society and fails every time. She is not strong enough to lift herself out of that society. "The House of Mirth" is a novel of the first order.

"The Fruit of the Tree" attracted equal attention, but is less good. John Amherst, of good family, is an enthusiast for social welfare work. Justine Brent, a nurse, had been at the Paris convent where Bessy Westmore, owner of the Westmore Mills, was educated. Convinced that she shares all his ideas for improving the condition of the workers at Westmore, John Amherst marries Bessy. But he finds himself trapped in an idle and useless social life. Bessy is hurt by a fall from her horse; there is no hope of recovery. Justine Brent, to end useless suffering, administers an overdose of morphine. Afterward John Amherst marries her; Justine's secret comes out and makes a breach between them. They are finally brought together by the devotion between Justine and John's step-child.

Mrs. Wharton knew nothing about industrialism or welfare work and this part of her story is unreal. Nor is the reconciliation at the end convincing; the last part of the book is full of contrivance. Certainly one subject of the book is "the problem of wealth trying simultaneously to satisfy two contradictory demands" but as Mrs. Wharton does not solve this, and as it is rather remote

from most of us, Justine's act took the foreground. People were genuinely excited over the question as to whether it can ever be right for the doctor or the nurse to help a sufferer die. Mrs. Wharton could have satisfied most readers only by having Justine hopelessly injured and confronting her with the choice she found so possible in Bessy's case.

"The Reef" is laid abroad. George Darrow, on his way to receive an answer from Anna Leath, gets word from her to postpone his visit. He falls into an adventure with Sophie Viner, after helping her on the pier. Months pass, and when he finally arrives for his visit to Anna he finds Sophie Viner acting as governess of Anna's daughter and betrothed to her stepson. Both Darrow and Miss Viner endeavor to conceal their episode but, by degrees, their story is guessed. None of these people have much moral strength and none "does anything worthy of the situation." This lack of drama and the general effect of a blind alley (an unpleasant alley at that) made the novel unpopular.

"The Custom of the Country" was Mrs. Wharton's second important novel and like "The House of Mirth" is an outstanding portrait of a woman. Undine Spragg of Apex City, though twenty years earlier, is a composite portrait, just as much as Sinclair Lewis's George F. Babbitt, and gives a similar effect of slight caricature. She feeds on marriage and divorce, taking on a husband to be useful to her and discarding him when some other man appears who can give her what she newly wants. The Stentorian Hotel, Washington Square in New York and the Faubourg Saint-Germain in Paris are the stages of her career.

There is a division of opinion about the next novel, "Summer." The setting is New England. A girl of poor heritage whose aspirations promise to make some-

thing of her surrenders herself to an attractive but worthless fellow. He deserts her when she is with child. She goes away to the miserable backwoods community that she came from. It seems to her that the brutality of those people will be easier to bear than the patronizing kindness of the country village in which a broken-down lawyer has reared her. But when the lawyer, whom she has always despised, comes and offers to marry her she accepts the offer and returns to the hated village.

All this is related in a dispassionate manner. "It is as if Mrs. Wharton had determined to practice a severely objective method upon a character lacking dignity and charm, and had become herself indifferent to the experiment," observes Mr. Lovett. Say the Folletts: "She seems to be actuated by no consideration other than simple fidelity to how things happen. . . . The truth of life is there, but not the meaning of the truth. *That* we must find for ourselves; or perhaps it is not to be found; or perhaps it does not exist." Naturally most readers are dissatisfied.

And then came "The Age of Innocence." Newland Archer and May Welland belong to the rigidly guarded New York society of the 1870's. They are engaged. Upon their circle intrudes May's cousin, the Countess Olenska, victim of a European marriage. Archer is strongly attracted to the Countess and she not less to him. It is too late to back out of marrying May, and she and Archer are duly wedded. Society, then almost a family in its compulsive force, conspires all about Archer and the Countess; when Archer is perhaps on the edge of deserting his wife and making a wild dash with the Countess, May tells him she is with child. In that day and with that sort of man and within those social fences such news was final. In an epilogue we have a glimpse of Archer many years later, a staid citizen and a

husband of unblemished record, amusingly uneasy over his son's tendency toward an affair of the heart, a little disturbed for a moment by some recollection of his own past.

This is Mrs. Wharton's most important novel. It is also her best. Its fascination depends quite as much on the background and the lesser people as upon the principals and their story. Her pictures of a vanished New York, derived from her own childhood, are as vivid as anything in fiction. The Van der Luydens, Dagonets, Mr. Sillery Jackson and Mrs. Manson Mingott might have come straight out of Thackeray. The book contains slips; they do not matter. The agreeable artificiality of that little world, its glitter, its dignities and its absurdities are pictured "as familiarly as if she loved them, and as lucidly as if she hated them." With restrained humor and discreet satire, mellowed by the passage of years and experience of other societies, Mrs. Wharton breathes the breath of life into remembered scenes and persons. The outlines are still clear, the colors unfaded.

"The Glimpses of the Moon" is much thinner stuff. Susy Branch and Nick Lansing are two young Americans in Europe who live off other people. They marry that they may the better exploit the world. Bitter experience brings them to a parting of the ways and is finally represented as bringing them together on a sounder footing. "Scene reënforces the action by determining the mood of the characters in their several habitations—the joyous calm of Lake Como for the honeymoon; the frivolous splendor and dignified corruption of Venice for the parting; the thrifty streets of Passy for reunion in a new life."

Possibly "A Son at the Front" will be more readable some years from now than at present. Campton, a lame painter of some distinction, lives in Paris. His son,

George, has just finished his education and the father is counting on a trip to Italy for the chance to get acquainted with his boy. Campton's wife, Julia, after divorcing him, married a rich American named Brandt. These two also live in Paris and George has for some years been supported by the Brandts, spending part of his time with them. The novel opens at the end of July, 1914, when George, because of his French birth, is called to the colors. Campton and Brandt pull what wires they can to secure a clerical appointment for the boy. The intensity of the war and the French reverses bring Campton to regret that George should have been willing to remain behind the lines. But word comes that the son is lying wounded in hospital; he has all the time been at the front but has concealed the fact in writing home. Brought back to Paris, an effort is made to keep him there, a shallow little married woman of George's acquaintance lending what help she can. But the compulsion of the war is too great, and on his return to the front George is again wounded, this time fatally. He lives to hear that America is at last in the war and to know that Campton and the rest have an undivided aim while the war lasts. When George dies, the others, feeling they have lost everything except the hope of victory, bend themselves to help toward that with such courage as they have remaining.

There is good substance in "A Son at the Front," especially in the picture of the relation of father and son. The record of wartime Paris is interesting. But many of the moods of the story were ephemeral; they have vanished now and we can scarcely recapture them as we read.

"The Mother's Recompense," though not in the class with "The Age of Innocence," certainly ranks with "The House of Mirth" and "The Custom of the Country." It

resembles neither. Kate Clephane, an American living abroad, has in the years past had a lover younger than she. She revisits America to find her daughter, Anne, attracted to this man, who is seriously courting the girl. Time and again Kate thinks she will tell her daughter about the past, but she is never able to do it and she is otherwise quite unable to stop the marriage. Before the wedding, in a last crisis of doubt, Kate lays the situation before her Bishop, whose advice to her is to avoid any action which can only cause "sterile pain." Anne is married and the mother flees from the spectacle of her daughter's great happiness. Our last glimpse of her, abroad again, is much like our first—with the wounding difference of what has taken place.

As may be guessed, this is a highly dramatic story. Kate's feeling is extremely complicated. Sexual jealousy as well as maternal anguish, social and moral ideas along with personal humiliation, combine to afflict her. Acutely interesting are the efforts she makes to break off her daughter's attachment.

The title of "Twilight Sleep" is unfortunately misleading, though the phrase fits the subject of the novel aptly enough. Mrs. Wharton is writing, this time, about present-day New York and her title refers to the attitude of some of her group of people. Pauline Manford, for example, shuts her eyes to the existence of unpleasant realities of every sort. She has divorced Wyant and married Manford and her daily calendar, given us on the first page, runs regularly about as follows: "7.30 Mental uplift. 7.45 Breakfast. 8.00 Psycho-analysis. 8.15 See Cook. 8.30 Silent Meditation. 8.45 Facial massage. 9.00 Man with Persian miniatures. 9.15 Correspondence. 9.30 Manicure. 9.45 Eurhythmic exercises. 10.00 Hair waved. 10.15 Sit for bust. 10.30 Receive Mothers' Day

deputation. 11.00 Dancing lesson. 11.30 Birth Control committee."

Mrs. Manford would scarcely have time to observe what went on under the family surface even if she were disposed to admit the existence of human passion and frailty. Most of the trouble brewing centers in Lita, a wholly selfish toy, the wife of Mrs. Manford's son by her first marriage. Manford, who has lost interest in his wife, exercises his paternal instinct to keep Lita from a scandalous scrape or two. As sometimes happens, the paternal feeling develops in an unexpected direction. The fact that Manford is old enough to be Lita's father matters not at all; it never does.

Things move, a little veiledly, toward a dramatic climax. One night there is a shooting in the Manford country house. Nona, Manford's daughter, who has all along been aware of the impending disaster, is struck by the bullets, obviously as the result of an effort to save some one else, probably Lita. Mrs. Wharton handles this most important scene far too obscurely; it is scarcely clear who fired the shots or at whom. The whole affair is hushed up. Mrs. Manford continues to skate over the hidden depths. Nona is left a hopeless cynic. The others have probably been arrested for a brief time from playing with explosives. Plainly, by weakness toward the end Mrs. Wharton misses making this a novel worthy to rank with "The House of Mirth," "The Custom of the Country," and "The Mother's Recompense."

IV

Mrs. Wharton's novelettes are quite as important as her novels. Three of them, possibly five, rank with her finest novel, "The Age of Innocence." One, "Ethan Frome," would by many be ranked above everything else she has written. Her novelettes are:

"The Touchstone" (1900)
"Sanctuary" (1903)
"Madame de Treymes" (1907)
"Ethan Frome" (1911)
"The Marne" (1918)
"False Dawn." Old New York—the '40's. (1924)
"The Old Maid." Old New York—the '50's. (1924)
"The Spark." Old New York—the '60's. (1924)
"New Year's Day." Old New York—the '70's. (1924)

"Madame de Treymes" deserves a word. John Durham, an American, is in love with the American sister-in-law of Madame de Treymes, and his love is returned. The Frenchwoman offers her unlimited influence with her family to secure divorce, with the possession of her son, for the sister-in-law. The condition is that Durham pay the gambling debts of a certain Prince. But Durham refuses. The flaw lies in the extreme improbability that a well-born woman would "give up the most intimate and most shameful secret of her heart to a stranger, almost a first-comer." Mrs. Wharton tries to account for this but does not succeed.

There can be no doubt that "Ethan Frome" is one of the masterpieces of American literature. Although she was later to use New England as the setting for "Summer," in the words of Mr. Lovett, " 'Summer' lacks the compression under which the force of 'Ethan Frome' is generated." Says Carl Van Doren: "In 'Ethan Frome,' losing from her clear voice for a moment the note of satire, Mrs. Wharton reaches her highest point of tragic passion. In the bleak life of Ethan Frome on his bleak hillside there blooms an exquisite love which during a few hours of rapture promises to transform his fate; but poverty clutches him, drives him to attempt suicide with the woman he loves, and then condemns him to one of the most appalling expiations in fiction—to a slavery in

comparison with which his former life was almost freedom. Not since Hawthorne has a novelist built on the New England soil a tragedy of such elevation of mood as this."

"The Marne" belongs with "A Son at the Front." An American boy, Troy Belknap, who was in Paris in the first days of the war returns to America to find Americans indifferent at first, boastful and patronizing toward the French later on. He finally gets back to France as an ambulance driver. When a regiment of Americans passes him, going into action in the second Battle of the Marne, he joins them, volunteers for a scouting expedition, is hit while trying to carry back a wounded soldier and recovers consciousness in the hospital, proud of his share in the fight. "A simple, moving rendering of the theme of military glory which reminds one that if wars are planned by the minds of old men and sustained by the emotions of women they are fought by boys."

"Old New York" is the collective title given to the four novelettes, "False Dawn (The '40's)," "The Old Maid (The '50's)," "The Spark (The '60's)" and "New Year's Day (The '70's)." Strictly, only the last is contemporary with "The Age of Innocence," but to us to-day they seem to embody the identical background and to deal with the same society.

"False Dawn" tells of Lewis Raycie, sent on the Grand Tour to round out his education and to purchase the nucleus of a collection of paintings. The young man falls under the spell of Italian Primitives and neglects the painters his generation cherishes. His premature appreciation of early Italian art, combined with his love for a girl who is no "match" for him, ruins him with his family. But a cousin who inherits Raycie's collection is able to exchange it for pearls and Rolls-Royce cars.

"The Old Maid" is the story of Charlotte Lovell, walled

in by convention and respectability, whose destiny it was to have to stand aside from her rôle as a mother, take on gradually the outward appearance of spinsterhood, and see her cousin play the rôle of mother to the girl, Tina, really Charlotte's child.

Hayley Delane, a fettered giant, holds the stage in "The Spark." We see him in the 1890's, in his late middle age. At times, as when he thrashes a man on the polo field or when he brings his broken old father-in-law into his home, the giant in Delane stirs and the petty, frivolous folk who surround him stand back amazed. Some great experience of his youth explains him and the revelation of what this was takes us back to the 1860's and an encounter in the Civil War. This, it should perhaps be added, is not a Lincoln story.

" 'She was *bad* . . . always. They used to meet at the Fifth Avenue Hotel,' said my mother, as if the scene of the offense added to the guilt of the couple whose past she was revealing." Thus opens "New Year's Day," and with it the history of Lizzie Hazeldean and Henry Prest. Old New York had naturally but one judgment on Mrs. Hazeldean. But the truth was that she loved only her invalid husband and needed money desperately for his proper care. What ways to procure a great deal of money were open to a married woman of good family in New York in the 1870's? Not more than one.

Beyond doubt, "The Old Maid" and "New Year's Day" stand with "Ethan Frome" and "The Age of Innocence" as Mrs. Wharton's best work. "False Dawn" and "The Spark" may be included if we think of the four items comprised in "Old New York" collectively.

V

Mrs. Wharton first achieved distinction as a writer of short stories and some of these are famous, for example,

"Xingu," with its constantly quoted opening sentence: "Mrs. Ballinger is one of the ladies who pursue Culture in bands, as though it were dangerous to meet alone." The dimensions of this chapter do not permit a review of her stories nor even mention of half a dozen non-fiction books. These are included in the bibliography at the end of the chapter, of course. We must now briefly consider the qualities of her work as a whole.

The protests because she often presents immoral persons have long since stopped. We realize that what is moral can often only be illustrated by showing that which is not. But, more searchingly, we have come to understand Mrs. Wharton's attitude, which is that moral conduct is a personal rather than a social matter. "Is"? Well, at least should be. This idea lies behind "The Age of Innocence," "The Old Maid," "New Year's Day," and even "Ethan Frome"—all her greatest works. There is a further moral attitude discernible: she constantly refuses to generalize and is always intent on the particular instance. For *this* person in *these* circumstances the moral thing would be thus and so. Nor can morality, in her judgment, demand the impossible. It is only because we feel that Lily Bart in "The House of Mirth" was capable of changing her destiny—and only to the extent we feel her to have been able—that we can condemn her. Fidelity to the best in oneself is Mrs. Wharton's morality. She calls for complete honesty joined with high courage and the clean mind where a sexual relation is in question. Despite the satirical treatment of Pauline Manford in "Twilight Sleep," who can doubt that the author regards Pauline, with her continual self-deception, as a profoundly immoral person. But although Lizzie Hazeldean in "New Year's Day" used to meet Henry Prest at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, Mrs. Wharton is not the one to call Lizzie a "bad" woman.

She writes chiefly about people of social position, people of wide education, people of cosmopolitan experience. First, because these are the kind of people she knows; second, because, like Henry James, she feels that though man is a civilized animal, it is the civilization, and not the animal, that is interesting. Many of her stories deal with the appreciation of life through art but she never sets out to "uplift" us. If, for example, the hinge of the action in "False Dawn" should kindle us to some interest in the history of painting, well and good; if not, there remains the real story which every one can appreciate, the story of the man who was ahead of his time.

Is Mrs. Wharton a snob? She is, certainly, in such a delineation as Mrs. Ballinger, the clubwoman type, in "Xingu." Her excuse must be the very valid one, that we are all of us snobs toward somebody at some time. But her tongue is never in her cheek and her sense of humor rarely leads her into injustice or even unkindness. It is, no doubt, wit rather than humor and its almost unfailing exercise is directed against every kind of littleness and provincialism, no matter though it claim the most sacred privileges of caste. "Her contempt," explains Mr. Lovett, "is for the aspirants to a position which they do not deserve, the pretenders to a culture they do not possess. . . . Contrast her treatment of Adelaide Painter, in 'The Reef,' the lady from Braintree, Massachusetts, who ruggedly preserves her independence amid the enchantments of Paris, and Mrs. Heeny, the facile parasite in 'The Custom of the Country,' the one a subject of dignified amusement, the other of scornful laughter."

No one of our time can write more beautifully. The tendency to be too fine-spun was early outgrown; and Mrs. Wharton was probably saved from the excesses of "literary" writing and the reefs of intellectual abstraction by her sex. She is a highly perceptive as well as mentally

energetic woman and she gets down every vivid detail of feminine notice. But having done this, her attitude remains masculine and detached. In this—to make a difficult point a shade clearer—she is an invigorating contrast to Mr. A. S. M. Hutchinson, author of "If Winter Comes" and "This Freedom," surely the most over-emotional and feminine of contemporary novelists.

Nowhere does Mrs. Wharton reveal with clearness her basic philosophy as, for example, Thomas Hardy reveals his in "Tess of the D'Urbervilles." In place of it she offers, everywhere throughout her work, a code. It is, on the personal side, the old code of the gentleman and gentlewoman but the stuffiness has been taken out of it and it has added intellectual responsibility to its exacting requirements. To be honest, brave, frank, generous and compassionate; to reach out for the fullest enjoyment of life compatible with the rights of others; to think well before acting and to act without hesitation, and in every situation to keep a perspective and to behave urbanely—this, Mrs. Wharton gives us to understand, is a workable rule of life, because a rule we can apply, no matter what life brings us.

Books by Edith Wharton

*** Of first importance
** Of next importance
* Third in importance

1899. The Greater Inclination. Short stories. *Scribner.*
1900. The Touchstone. Novelette. *Scribner.*
1901. * Crucial Instances. Short stories. *Scribner.*
1901. The Decoration of Houses (with Ogden Codman, Jr.). *Scribner.*
1902. * The Valley of Decision. Novel. *Scribner.*
1903. Sanctuary. Novelette. *Scribner.*
1904. Italian Villas and Their Gardens. *Century.*
1904. * The Descent of Man and Other Stories. *Scribner.*

1905. ** The House of Mirth. Novel. *Scribner.*
1905. Italian Backgrounds. *Scribner.*
1907. * The Fruit of the Tree. Novel. *Scribner.*
1907. Madame de Treymes. Novelette. *Scribner.*
1908. * A Motor-Flight Through France. *Scribner.*
1908. The Hermit and the Wild Woman. Short stories. *Scribner.*
1909. Artemis to Actæon and Other Verse. *Scribner.*
1910. Tales of Men and Ghosts. Short stories. *Scribner.*
1911. *** Ethan Frome. Novelette. *Scribner.*
1912. * The Reef. Novel. *Appleton.*
1913. ** The Custom of the Country. Novel. *Scribner.*
1915. Fighting France from Dunkerque to Belfort. *Scribner.*
1916. ** Xingu and Other Stories. *Scribner.*
1917. * Summer. Novel. *Appleton.*
1918. The Marne. Novelette. *Appleton.*
1919. French Ways and Their Meaning. *Appleton.*
1920. In Morocco. *Scribner.*
1920. *** The Age of Innocence. Novel. *Appleton.*
1922. * The Glimpses of the Moon. Novel. *Appleton.*
1923. A Son at the Front. Novel. *Scribner.*
1924. *** Old New York. Four novelettes. *Appleton.*
** False Dawn (The '40's).
*** The Old Maid (The '50's).
* The Spark (The '60's).
*** New Year's Day (The '70's).
1925. ** The Mother's Recompense. Novel. *Appleton.*
1925. * The Writing of Fiction. Essays on theory and principles of the art; not a "practical" handbook. *Scribner.*
1926. Here and Beyond. Short stories. *Appleton.*
1927. * Twilight Sleep. Novel. *Appleton.*

Sources on Edith Wharton

"Edith Wharton," by Robert Morss Lovett. McBride (1925). By all odds the best account.

"Contemporary American Novelists, 1900-1920," by Carl van Doren. Macmillan (1922). Pages 95-104. A condensed critique.

"Some Modern Novelists," by Helen Thomas Follett and

Wilson Follett. Holt (1918). Pages 291-311. Deals with Mrs. Wharton's work as far as her novel, "Summer." Singles out "The Valley of Decision" for special attention.

"Edith Wharton, A Critical Study," by Katharine Fullerton Gerould. Appleton (1922). Pamphlet. A spirited exposition of what she conceives to be Mrs. Wharton's special merits by a woman whose interest lies particularly in the social class Mrs. Wharton writes about.

"The Letters of Henry James," edited by Percy Lubbock. Scribner (1923). His letters to Edith Wharton are sometimes amusing and frequently illuminating.

"Some Contemporary Americans," by Percy H. Boynton. University of Chicago Press (1924). Pages 89-107. Naturally a Chicagoan despises the effete society of Mrs. Wharton's pages.

"Voices of Tomorrow," by Edwin Björkman. Pages 290-305.

"The New American Type," by Henry Dwight Sedgwick. Pages 51-97.

"American Nights Entertainment," by Grant Overton. (Appleton, Doran, Doubleday, Scribner: 1923.) Pages 345-362. A rash attempt to read Mrs. Wharton's own mind about her work.

"Authors of the Day," by Grant Overton. Doran (1924). Pages 189-204. A reprinting of the chapter in "American Nights Entertainment," above.

MARGARET WIDDEMER

ALTHOUGH Margaret Widdemer's best work has been done in poetry, she is by now more widely known as a novelist. Most of her novels are primarily for entertainment, although the reader hardly ever escapes without having, with the chief character, faced at least one portentous problem. But "Graven Image" (1923) is a piece of stern realism throughout and the stories of Asbury Park collected in "The Boardwalk" (1919) are quietly honest and interesting in their use of psychological material.

She was born in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, the daughter of the Rev. Howard Taylor Widdemer and Alice De Witt Widdemer. She was graduated from a library school and was for two years a librarian.

"Charis Sees It Through" (1924) is perhaps her most satisfactory novel to date. A girl of good American family falls head over heels in love with a gifted young Czech (or Bohemian). They are married; and not long afterward the husband's family appears from Europe to live with them. These are out-and-out peasants. Miss Widdemer does not shirk the situation.

"Gallant Lady" (1926) is the tale of a gay young wife and mother who suddenly discovers that she has never been legally married. "More Than Wife" (1927) pictures the problem of marriage and the career in the case of Silvia Hawthorne, architect.

BOOKS BY MARGARET WIDDEMER

1915. THE FACTORIES, WITH OTHER LYRICS.
1915. THE ROSE-GARDEN HUSBAND. Novel.

1915. Why Not?
1917. The Wishing-Ring Man.
1918. The Old Road to Paradise. Poems. *Holt.*
1918. You're Only Young Once. *Holt.*
1919. The Boardwalk. Short stories. *Holt.*
1920. I've Married Marjorie. Novel. *Harcourt.*
1921. The Year of Delight.
1921. Cross-Currents. Poems. *Harcourt.*
1922. A Tree with a Bird in It. Verse parodies.
The Haunted Hour. An anthology. *Harcourt.*
Little Girl and Boy Land. Poems for children. *Harcourt.*
A Minister of Grace. Short stories. *Harcourt.*
1923. Binkie and the Bell Dolls.
1923. Graven Image. Novel. *Harcourt.*
1924. Charis Sees It Through. Novel. *Harcourt.*
1925. Ballads and Lyrics. *Harcourt.*
1926. Gallant Lady. Novel. *Harcourt.*
1927. More Than Wife. Novel. *Harcourt.*

KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN

A CHAPTER on Kate Douglas Wiggin could subsist entirely on one's memories of bits in her stories.

"Penelope's Progress." Salemina, Francesca and Penelope will shortly inspect Scotland, but first:

"On arriving in New York, Francesca discovered that the young lawyer whom for six months she had been advising to marry somebody 'more worthy than herself' was at last about to do it. This was somewhat in the nature of a shock, for Francesca has been in the habit, ever since she was seventeen, of giving her lovers similar advice, and up to this time no one of them has ever taken it. She therefore has had the not unnatural hope, I think, of organizing at one time or another all those disappointed and faithful swains into a celibate brotherhood; and perhaps of driving by the interesting monastery with her husband and calling his attention modestly to the fact that these poor monks were filling their barren lives with deeds of piety, trying to remember their Creator with such assiduity that they might, in time, forget Her."

Francesca and Penelope, heads bent over a list of the Kings of England, try to decide whether "b. 1665" means born or beheaded.

The English pronunciation of proper names. "On the ground floor are the Misses Hepburn-Sciennes (pronounced Hebburn-Sheens); on the floor above us are Miss Colquhoun (Cohoon) and her cousin, Miss Cockburn-Sinclair (Coburn-Sinkler). As soon as the Hepburn-Sciennes depart, Mrs. M'Collop expects Mrs. Menzies of Kilconquhar, of whom we shall speak as Mrs. Mingess of Kinyukkar."

"Marm Lisa." The twins, Atlantic and Pacific Simonson. Mrs. Grubb. Mrs. Grubb's Unity Hall, the meeting-place of the Order of Present Perfection. On the wall "an ingenious pictorial representation of the fifty largest cities of the world, with the successful establishment of various regenerating ideas indicated by colored disks of paper neatly pasted on the surface." Blue was for Temperance, green for the Single Tax; orange, Cremation; red, Abolition of War; purple, Vegetarianism; yellow, Hypnotism; black, Dress Reform; blush rose, Social Purity; silver, Theosophy; magenta, Religious Liberty; and with apparent inappropriateness, crushed strawberry denoted that in this spot the Emancipation of Women had made a forward stride. A small gold star marked the conquests of the Eldorado face powder, S. Cora Grubb, sole agent.

The cat, 'Zekiel, in "The Old Peabody Pew":

" 'Zekiel had lost his tail in a mowing-machine; 'Zekiel had the asthma, and the immersion of his nose in milk made him sneeze, so he was wont to slip his paw in and out of the dish and lick it patiently for five minutes together. Nancy often watched him pityingly, giving him kind and gentle words to sustain his fainting spirit, but to-night she paid no heed to him, although he sneezed violently to attract her attention."

The boastful old man, Turrible Wiley, in "Rose o' the River":

" 'I've tried all kinds o' labor. Some of 'em don't suit my liver, some disagrees with my stomach, and the rest of 'em has vibrations.' "

Rebecca, in "Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm," telling Miss Dearborn that she can't write about nature and slavery, having really nothing to say about either; making her report on the missionaries' children "all born under Syrian skies"; playing on the tinkling old piano,

"Wild roved an Indian girl, bright Alfarata"; inditing the invaluable couplet:

When Joy and Duty clash
Let Duty go to smash.

II

She was born a Smith, came of New England stock, and despite some time in California, counts as a New England author. The date of her birth was 1859; of her death, August 24, 1923. Her father was Robert N. Smith, her mother Helen E. Dyer Smith. When she was eighteen her step-father's health compelled him to go to Santa Barbara. Kate, who had been trained to teach children, was called to direct the Silver Street kindergartens in San Francisco when still not much more than a girl. Her home through all the later years of her life was in Hollis, Maine, a village on the banks of the Saco River.

"Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm," afterward made into a highly successful play, is her most popular book. Several million copies of her books have been sold.

Once at a fair held in the grounds of Lord Darnley, County Meath, Ireland, Mrs. Wiggin visited a crystal gazer imported from Dublin for the occasion.

"You have many children," said the seer.

"I have no children."

"But I see them. So many! They are clinging to you," the woman declared, her eyes on the crystal. "They are children of a relative? No? . . . I cannot understand. I *see them.*"

They left her puzzled and frowning.

Books by Kate Douglas Wiggin

1886. The Birds' Christmas Carol. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1889. The Story of Patsy. *Houghton Mifflin.*

1889. A Summer in a Canyon. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1890. Timothy's Quest. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1890. The Story Hour (with Nora A. Smith, her sister), *Houghton Mifflin.*
1892. Children's Rights (with Nora A. Smith). *Houghton Mifflin.*
1893. A Cathedral Courtship. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1893. Penelope's English Experiences. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1893. Polly Oliver's Problem. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1895. The Village Watch-Tower. Short stories. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1895. Froebel's Gifts (with Nora A. Smith). *Houghton Mifflin.*
1896. Froebel's Occupations (with Nora A. Smith). *Houghton Mifflin.*
1896. Kindergarten Principles and Practice (with Nora A. Smith). *Houghton Mifflin.*
1896. Marm Lisa. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1896. Nine Love Songs and a Carol. Poems by Sill, Herrick, Amelie Rives, Ruth McEnery Stuart and others set to music by Mrs. Wiggin. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1898. Penelope's Progress. Scottish experiences. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1901. Penelope's Irish Experiences. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1902. The Diary of a Goose Girl. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1903. Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1904. The Affair at the Inn (with Mary and Jane Findlater and Allan McAulay). *Houghton Mifflin.*
1905. Rose o' the River. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1907. New Chronicles of Rebecca. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1907. Finding a Home. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1907. The Flag-Raising. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1907. The Old Peabody Pew. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1909. Susanna and Sue. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1911. Robinetta (with Mary and Jane Findlater and Allan McAulay). *Houghton Mifflin.*
1911. Mother Carey's Chickens. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1912. A Child's Journey With Dickens. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1913. The Story of Waitstill Baxter. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1915. Penelope's Postscripts. *Houghton Mifflin.*

1916. The Romance of a Christmas Card. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1917. Golden Numbers. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1917. The Posy Ring. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1919. Ladies-in-Waiting. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1923. My Garden of Memory. Autobiography. *Houghton Mifflin.*
1924. Creeping Jenny. *Houghton Mifflin*

ELINOR WYLIE

From hailing her as a poet—one of the two best living women poets in America at the time, and Amy Lowell has since died—we have all got into the habit now of thinking of Elinor Wylie as a novelist. Perhaps she is. The one predictable thing about her has always been that she would do something entirely individual; and she always has. It has happened, in the last few years, to take the form of three novels; and of course these were unique novels. A certain general likeness is upon them all, no doubt, but it offers no clear resemblance to anybody else.

Or none worth consideration. Max Beerbohm, Oscar Wilde, Carl Van Vechten, Aldous Huxley or whom you will, though they offer small parallels, are away from the point. One could, perhaps, go back of the nineteenth century, or search abroad, and find instructive comparisons—only to the generality of readers they would not be instructive but obfuscating. For our current purpose, she stems alone.

Biographical data usually begin by explaining that she is no connection of I. A. R. Wylie. Miss Ida Wylie is an English writer of fiction born in Australia. Elinor Wylie was born in Washington, D. C., and Nancy Hoyt, author of two novels, "Roundabout" and "Unkind Star," is her younger sister. They are daughters of the late Henry Martyn Hoyt and Anne MacMichael Hoyt. Elinor Wylie became the wife of William Rose Benét, poet and writer, in 1923.[1]

[1] Mr. Benét is an older brother of Stephen Vincent Benét, the novelist and short story writer, and Laura Benét, the poet. William Rose Benét first married Teresa Frances Thompson, younger sister of Kathleen Norris, the novelist. The first Mrs. Benét died in 1919.

Her reputation as a poet attained extraordinary proportions on the strength of one book of verse, her first book, "Nets to Catch the Wind" (1921). But a second book of poems, "Black Armour" (1923), though slender in size, only served to confirm and extend this reputation. In the same year "Jennifer Lorn" appeared, a replica of the eighteenth century novel for which the publisher simulated an eighteenth century binding. This was a suitably fantastic story about an English aristocrat and his bride who journey to the India of the East India Company and meet with bizarre adventures.

It was followed by "The Venetian Glass Nephew" (1925), a tale of the Italian Renaissance, and this was succeeded by "The Orphan Angel" (1926), an imaginative romance in which the poet Shelley is not drowned but survives shipwreck and fares to America for a whole new set of adventures. "The Orphan Angel" was selected for distribution to subscribers of one of the organizations supplying ready-made reading; thus Elinor Wylie's work was brought at last to the attention of a large audience.

All three of Elinor Wylie's novels are of a finished sophistication, although there is a quality of freshness and romantic feeling about "The Orphan Angel" which is not in the first two. "Jennifer Lorn" and "The Venetian Glass Nephew" are highly mannered and elaborate in pattern. The note of satire is never absent from her work in prose, but it is restrained and careless. There is a hard, lustrous, lovely lacquered surface to her writing which may be enjoyed for its own sake—but the wood underneath has a grain. She is a distinct gain to the variety of fiction, to its reach toward fantasy and its grasp upon *decor*.

As this is written she is completing a new novel, "Mr. Hodge and Mr. Hazard" (for publication in the spring

of 1928) and a new book of poems, "Trivial Breath" (1928), is definitely promised.

Books by Elinor Wylie

1921. Nets to Catch the Wind. Poems. *Harcourt.*
1923. Black Armour. Poems. *Doran.*
1923. Jennifer Lorn. *Doran.*
1925. The Venetian Glass Nephew. *Doran.*
1926. The Orphan Angel. *Knopf.*
1928. Mr. Hodge and Mr. Hazard. *Knopf.*
1928. Trivial Breath. Poems. *Knopf.*

Sources on Elinor Wylie

"Fire Under the Andes," by Elizabeth Shipley Sergeant, contains a chapter on Elinor Wylie, with a camera portrait by Hoppe. Published by Knopf.

THE END

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